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BY

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&c.

LONDON
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THE
CHAPEL
RIVER
PRESS
KINGSTON
SURREY

TO MY BROTHER

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MRS. MULLIGAN'S MILLIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW WINDOW.

MRS. GALLAHER put her head over the bannisters and screamed down to her son:

"Jack, here's Jem comin' up the sthreet!"

From the small room at the rear of the shop, where he was buckling together the segments of a fishing-rod, Jack shouted:

"All right, mother!"

She had been setting the front bedroom straight; an old red handkerchief twisted turbanlike about her black hair, her sleeves rolled up above her elbows. Having shoved the bed out from the wall, made it, and shoved it back again, she had knelt down beside the open window to gaze ravenously across the broad market square at the big, rambling Inn known as the "Horse and Car." It loomed big and bright in a shaft of sunlight now, and Mrs. Gallaher's dark eyes watered eagerly at it. A glance to the left down the main street had shown her the round-faced, round-eyed James Donohue, with fishing-rod and basket.

He smiled brightly as he turned into Gallaher's Stores and said "Good-mornin', sir," to Mr. Gallaher, who, in shirt sleeves, seated on a barrel, was reading the local paper, *The Carrigmore Flash-light*, close to the window.

"The top o' the mornin' t'you, Jem," responded Mr. Gallaher heartily, lowering his paper a little and looking over his spectacles. "Jack's inside, waitin' for you."

So James Donohue went down the passage, turning into the little room on the right, where he found Jack Gallaher settling a cap on his curly head and, like his friend, with basket on back and rod under his arm.

"Ready, Jack?" said James, with a nod.

"Ay, Jem," returned Jack, giving a final jerk to the strap of the basket. "Ready's the word. Let's step out."

As they went down the passage they were accosted by the voice of Mrs. Gallaher, who was now seated half-way down the stairs resting from her labours.

"There y'are, Jem!" said she.

Turning, James Donohue raised his cap with a respectful smile, for although Mrs. Gallaher looked dusty, she was the handsome mother of his bosom companion Jack Gallaher, admittedly the most admired youth in the town of Carrigmore.

"I hope you won't come across that ould Mrs. Mulligan," said Mrs. Gallaher. "I hear she's bin seen prowlin' about. It's two year since she was last in the town, an' whinivir she comes it's always to bring a curse with her."

"I haven't seen her myself, ma'am," replied

James, "but I belave she's about somewhere. They do say she has the evil eye; but sure, maybe, she not as bad as she's painted."

"It's twenty year," observed Mrs. Gallaher meditatively, "since her husband an' child died, an' she's wandhered about the counthry ivir since—a disgrace to herself an' ivrybody belongin' to her. Sorra a pin I'd care where she was or what she does if it wasn't for poor Mrs. Munro that has the misfortune to be related to her. All I hope is, if the ould wretch comes to Carrigmore, she'll kape clear of the 'Horse an' Car.'"

"I hope so, ma'am," assented James. "She wouldn't be welkim there, anyhow."

Here Jack gave him a warning nudge, and James, raising his cap again, turned and went out, Mr. Gallaher speeding them with a cheerful nod over his paper as they passed.

Almost in a direct line between Gallaher's Stores and the "Horse and Car" Inn, and about half-way between both houses, was the Market Weighing Office—a small, square stone building, a busy centre on market days, but now deserted save for the presence of a small, red-haired, white-faced man, who was pacing up and down in the shadow cast by its eastern wall. He wore a tall silk hat on the back of his head, a green tie with gilt pin, and a long-tailed coat—looking like something between a country solicitor and a village doctor. It was, in fact, Mr. Casey, editor of the *Carrigmore Flashlight*. He seemed as if guarding the Inn, towards which he cast malevolent glances from under his scraggy eyebrows. When the young men were passing he advanced and accosted them in a rich

local accent, of which, amongst other qualities, he was extremely vain.

" Well, my frinds," said he, " goin' fishin' ? "

They halted, and Jack Gallaher took the opportunity of lighting a cigarette.

" Ay, troth, sir," replied James Donohue respectfully, " though it's rather bright for sport."

" I'm on the watch here," explained Mr. Casey. Having stepped out from the shadow of the Weigh Office, he waved a right hand towards the Inn. " I want to see if Johnnie Munro 'll have the audacity to put in foreign glass afther my latest editorial. Did you rade it ? "

" I didn't indade yet, sir," answered James, still respectfully.

Like most Carrigmore people, he was abjectly afraid of Mr. Casey, whose printed scurrilities still continued, despite the large number of actions for defamation which had sent him to prison a dozen times.

" I'll give you a word or two from it," observed Mr. Casey, whisking a copy of the *Flashlight* from the back pocket of his coat; and then inflating his chest, he read out :

" ' At a time when every true son of Ireland should be straining every nerve to place Irish Ireland on its own basis, we find, even here in our town of Carrigmore, one of those creatures who, in his own small way, does his best to impede the march of the nation. We refer to Johnnie Munro, proprietor of the ' Horse and Car,' who has decided to put a new window in the coffee room. We have no objection to this man doing what he pleases with

his own property. It is no concern of Ours. What concerns Us is, that the glass for this new window is to come from England, and the workmen are to be imported. What is the use of Our striving towards the goal of independence when the wishes of the country can be defied by a centipede like Munro ? ' "

" What d'you think of that ? " he asked, pausing to bend his malicious eyes on the soft, round face of James Donohue. " Does it sthrike home ? "

" Bedad, it's powerful, there's no denyin'," assented James, who was always ready to agree with everybody on anything.

" I'll sthrike Johnnie Munro deeper yet," said Mr. Casey, with a malignant grin, which deepened the lines of his pallid face. " I'll sthrike him out o' Carrigmore before I'm done with him. But, hould on, I've more to rade."

" Arra, come on, Jem," said Jack Gallaher, impatiently catching his irresolute friend by the arm. " Don't be wastin' time talkin' to the likes of him."

" All right, Jack Gallaher," cried Mr. Casey after them. " Maybe your time will come too."

" I'll be ready for you," exclaimed Jack, flinging back the words contemptuously over his shoulder.

" Only you're the son of the han'sumest woman in Carrigmore," muttered Mr. Casey, who was a widower and not indifferent to feminine charms, " it would have come before now."

He resumed his sentry-like attitude in the shadow of the Weigh Office, whilst the two young men went on towards the Carrig river.

"You'd think that man," said Jack scornfully, "would get sense by this time—all the times he's been in jail for blaggardin' dacint people in that rag of his. But I sippose it's in his blood, an' he can't help it."

"Sure, he's had his knife in Misther Munro," remarked James, "ivir since Misther Munro got a decree agin him for a whisky bill. He's only a blackmailer, always pullin' the divil by the tail. But you don't look up to the mark to-day, Jack."

This with a side glance at his companion's mop of curls, which, in conjunction with the dark eyes he inherited from his mother, made Jack Gallaher at once the admiration and despair of the girls of Carrigmore.

"Mother has bin worryin' me agin," he explained, "about Kate Munro. She left it off for some time, because she saw it was doin' no good; now this new winda that Misther Munro's gettin' into the 'Horse an' Car' has set her off agin. I don't deny at all that Kate's a nice girl—a good, honist, handsome girl——"

"She's all that!" ejaculated James Donohue with such fervour that the other looked at him in surprise.

"Maybe you'd like to go in for her yourself, Jem," he suggested eagerly. "You're more likely to get married an' settle down nor me."

A spasm crossed James's soft face, which crimsoned.

"Like you, Jack," he stammered, with downcast head. "I'm not a marryin' man; and, in any case, Kate's too nice a girl for the likes o' me."

"Not a bit!" protested Jack. "But if you're not a marryin' man, there's an ind to it. For my part, I think there's too much blather goin' on about love. What's the use of it? I'd rather have a good game of hurley any day, or a day's fishin', than go foolin' about the prettiest girl in the world. I'm goin' to live an' die a bachelor! What does a man want settlin' down, as they call it, an' bringin' a lot of poor childher into the world whin there's fish in the river an' green fields to walk about in, an' plinty o' fresh air whin you look for it? No hangin' over a fire an' lis'enin' to childher squawkin' for me!"

"Maybe you're right," said James.

"Right or wrong, the bachelor's life for me!" exclaimed Jack. "Ould Mrs. Mulligan's not such a fool as they say. She wandhers about the world an' has no cares or thrubbles. What's that ould song she sings?"

As they left the road, jumping a ditch into the fields, he threw back his head and sang:

"I built a house with care an' there
Care long with me did fare O!
But now I trudge the dusty road,
The rags I wear my only load:
The whole wide world is my abode—
An' the divil a hair I care O!"

And James Donohue, as he walked beside his light-hearted friend, smiled admiringly, but remained silent.

Long before the two friends returned from whipping the Carrig, a large number of people had gathered about the "Horse and Car" Inn, and three constables marched up and down in front of the boarded window. As time went on the

crowd increased. On the opposite side of the Market Square Mr. Gallaher stood in the doorway of his stores, smiling cynically at the curiosity-mongers.

" One 'd think," he observed aloud, as he heard his wife approaching from the shop, " that a winda was the most wondherful thing in the world. Look at all thim fools ! "

Standing on tiptoe, Mrs. Gallaher, with a new check apron on, stretched her neck to stare excitedly over her husband's shoulder.

" It's not the winda I think so much of," she exclaimed in her eager way, " but the energy of Misther Munro. He's improved the place wondherful. But, then, he's a careful, steady man, that's always thinkin' night an' day of improvin' his business."

Shrugging his shoulders, Mr. Gallaher—who was in his shirt sleeves, the day being warm—gave a short laugh.

" But how will it ind ? " he asked in a sarcastic voice.

" How will it ind ? " repeated Mrs. Gallaher shrilly, smoothing down her fresh apron. " It'll ind in his becomin' a rich man, as all energy an' carefulness an' abstainin' from sthrong dhrink inds ! "

Half turning, Mr. Gallaher gazed superciliously at her suffused face.

" That's one of them idays," said he, " that doesn't always work out thrue. Gettin' rich is of'en a mere matther of luck. How do you know that Misther Munro isn't goin' into debt over this plate-glass winda ? "

"How do I know?" repeated Mrs. Gallaher, patting her feet on the boarded floor.

"Ay, just so," said her husband. "Have you iver looked at his accounts?"

"No, I haven't," she replied. "But he's not the kind of man to get into debt. He's too careful."

Mr. Gallaher uttered his short laugh again.

"The most careful man in the world," said he, "can get into debt, especially if he's full of vanity an 'wants to make a flare up, like the Munros."

"Has it come yet?" asked his wife, pushing him aside. "I think I hear wheels."

At the same moment, catching sight of the cart coming up the street, Mr. Gallaher stepped hastily back.

"Maybe you do," said he, with a contemptuous grimace. "You kin have the whole doorway to yourself, I'm tired lookin' at a crowd of fools!"

He went inside, and, standing behind the counter, stared through the window.

"Three men have come out of the 'Horse an' Car'!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, talking from the doorway to her husband. "An' Misther Munro an' thim's takin' down the boords."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Gallaher, with affected indifference. "Well, I don't wish him any ill, but I'm afraid this pride 'll ind badly."

The small, red-whiskered editor, Mr. Casey, with his shabby tall hat and greasy frock-coat, had rapidly approached. Pausing close to Mrs. Gallaher, he extended a hand towards the crowd.

"If it cost me five years in jail," said he, "I'll hunt that man, Johnnie Munro, out of Carrigmore. He's goin' to have that plate-glass winda in,

in spite of all the warnin' I gave him in my latest editorial."

To this outburst Mrs. Gallaher merely replied with a glance of contempt, and turned her face towards the shop again.

"They're takin' down the boords," she called out, "just as I tould you!"

Owing to the unpleasant fact of Mr. Casey's presence Mr. Gallaher made no response.

"I suppose you saw the article I allude to?" inquired Mr. Casey, turning sharply round on Mrs. Gallaher.

She looked unflinchingly into his glaring eyes.

"D'you think I'd waste my time," said she, "readin' such stuff? No, thank God! I'm betther employed."

A flush of rage reddened his sallow face.

"You're complimentary, ma'am," said he, with intense scorn. "There's betther than you rades the editorials of the *Carrigmore Flashlight*."

"Then God help them!" retorted Mrs. Gallaher. "They're hard up for somethin' to do. If you've bin throwin' mud at Misther Munro you might save yourself the throuble, for everyone knows that you'd rather blaggard him than pay him the fifteen shillin's you owe him."

Whilst she hotly uttered these words, her thin hands gripping her hips, Mr. Casey pushed back his hat and gasped with rage. Inside the shop Mr. Gallaher sat down tremblingly on an oil barrel as he listened.

"D'you mane to insinuate," exclaimed Mr. Casey, stepping back and putting his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, "that I'd let personal

bias interfere with my public duty? If you do, you're mistaken, Mrs. Gallaher. And as for that pig-faced ruffian, Johnnie Munro, over there," he added, raising his voice, " you might as well be lashin' the hide of a rhinoceros."

" An', in the name of goodness," demanded Mrs. Gallaher, impatient of his presence, " what harm has the man done you? Isn't he a respectable, quiet, dacint man? "

" Respectable! " exclaimed Mr. Casey, with a hard, bitter laugh. " Respectable! and that cow of a wife of his niece to ould Mrs. Mulligan—the worst ould villain from Carrigmore to Cork! "

" It comes well from the likes of you," retorted Mrs. Gallaher, " abusin' a woman like Mrs. Munro because her aunt happens to be a bad, ould crature. Maybe your own people were no betther if the truth was known."

Taking off his hat Mr. Casey bowed low, his face convulsed in rage.

" Thank you, ma'am," said he. " I'll rimimber that to you, Mrs. Gallaher! "

As he replaced his hat and strutted away, thrusting his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat again, Mrs. Gallaher followed him with a short, contemptuous laugh.

" I'm nayther afraid of you or your paper! " she exclaimed, and her husband within mopped his bald head and shook on the oil barrel in an agony of apprehension.

But a sudden shout from the crowd around the " Horse and Car " made him spring up and press his face against the window pane.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. MULLIGAN APPEARS.

EVERYBODY, including the police and Mr. Munro, who, with his wife and daughter, stood on the Inn steps, turned with one accord to gaze at the cart approaching from the direction of the railway station. In the cart stood a large wooden case containing a wonderful sheet of glass, and this case, in addition to being roped to the body of the cart, was steadied by three men, whilst the horse was led slowly by another man. The untying of the ropes, the careful lifting down of the case, which was slowly deposited near the window, were events observed with intense interest, not only by the largely increased crowd, but by Mr. Casey standing at a distance, his hat far back on his red head, and also by Mrs. Gallaher and her husband, who had now joined her in the doorway. When two men had knocked out the temporary boarding from the coffee room window the three experts, who had brought the glass in the train, released the great glittering sheet and the people broke into a general cheer. Some doubters freely expressed the opinion that the glass would never be placed without accident and bets were exchanged on the subject.

"To think," gasped Mrs. Gallaher, her starting

eyes fixed on the final operation, "that it kem all the way from England in thrains, steamboats, thrains agin, an' now a cart, an' put up there without an much as a crack in it! It's dhramin' I am!"

"Sure, don't people that handle them things," said Mr. Gallaher discontentedly, "know their business like any other business? There's nothin' wondherful about it!"

"Maybe not," returned his wife bitterly. "The wonder is, that some people are awake over their business an' others asleep!"

The men, having finished their task, were brought in to the bar by Mr. Munro, and so liberally treated that their safe handling of any glass larger than a tumbler would have been extremely hazardous; and the crowd, after an hour's steady staring at the great new window, began to melt away. Mr. Casey had already gone, so torn with rage at the success of the proceedings, that his heated brain boiled in a mad hunt for epithets ferocious enough for his next editorial.

When her son Jack came home towards sunset Mrs. Gallaher met him in the doorway, and together they stood gazing at the grand glass, now brilliant with the reflected rays of the setting sun.

"It's like a big dimond, mother," said Jack.

Placing a hand on his shoulder his mother bent her lips close to his ear.

"It can be yours some day, Jack," said she.

A slight frown passed across Jack Gallaher's handsome face.

"How so, mother?" he asked with an assumption of ignorance.

"You know well, Jack," she said. "You've only to marry Kate Munro, the girl that's dyin' about you."

Jack shrugged his shoulders and made a sour grimace.

"Is that all?" he said sulkily.

"Be the same token, here she is!" exclaimed his mother flushing excitedly. "It's a rale magnet y'are to her. I wondher what she wants?"

There was little time left for wonder as Kate Munro, sighting Jack, started to run across from the Inn and arrived breathless.

"Father wants you, Mrs. Gallaher an' Misther Gallaher," she exclaimed, "to come over an' have a look at the winda from the inside."

"In troth, it's proud an' glad we'll be, Katie agra," said Jack's mother with fervour. "Are you there, Mike?" she shouted over her shoulder shopwards to her husband; then turning to Kate, added: "But what about Jack?"

The girl flushed hotly and her eyelids dropped.

"Oh, he's to come, too," she faltered, "if he likes."

"Of coorse, I'll go," responded Jack, forcing a smile as Kate raised appealing eyes to him.

Tactfully leaving the young couple alone, Mrs. Gallaher hastened, with delighted smiles, inward, meeting her open-eyed husband in the passage leading from the shop to the back parlour. In a short while she was divested of her check apron and dressed in her black Sunday gown. Mr. Gallaher, too, put on his black coat, and together they hurried across the street to the "Horse and Car," whither Kate and Jack had already gone.

There was still a sprinkling of townspeople admiring the window. Through them Mrs. Gallaher, excitedly pushing her way, hastened up the steps—slowly followed by her heavy-shouldered husband—and burst into the coffee room. Here a few of the more well-to-do people were gathered around Mr. and Mrs. Munro; and there was a profuse display of drinkables on the huge mahogany sideboard against the wall which faced the new window.

"I won't say a word to you, Misther Munro!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher playfully shaking her hand in the air at him, "because you're too grand a man to-day to spake to the likes of me. But I mane to kiss your good wife, for it's the goodness of her sowl and the great kindness of her heart that fills me now!"

With this effusive outburst, she rushed at Mrs. Munro and, throwing her arms round that lady's fat neck, kissed her rapturously; then burst into tears. The men looked on the floor and the women's eyes filled up.

"It's because of her," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, wiping her cheeks with the backs of her hands; "and the goodness of her, and the thrue woman's heart she has, that I'm glad an' happy an' proud to-day! It's not that winda," she cried, nodding quickly towards it several times, "though nothin' like it has ivir been seen in Carrigmore ayther before or since, an' never will be agin. No! It's not the winda, though it takes the sight out of my eyes; it's because she's worthy of it, an' she's worthy of twinty windas, God bless her day and night!"

Here Mrs. Gallaher was so overcome with

emotion that she would have sunk on the floor, only Mr. Maher, a respectable provision merchant, thrust a chair dexterously behind her. Then Mrs. Munro, almost as deeply affected, and red to the depths of her double chin, ordered somebody to get Mrs. Gallaher something; and half a dozen tumblers were quickly held in front of Mrs. Gallaher's eloquent face.

"I'll sit down beside you, alannah," said Mrs. Munro, affectionately, "and we'll dhrink a dhrop of port an' long life to the new winda."

The pride of Mrs. Gallaher at this condescension almost amounted to delirium. Grasping Mrs. Munro's fat hand she held it tightly; and, with an expression of joy too deep for words, clinked her tumbler against her companion's. Then someone shouted, "Let's all drink long life to the new winda!" and there was a cheer, stifled in the gurgling sound of hearty draughts.

"Look at thim," whispered Mrs. Gallaher, thrusting an elbow into Mrs. Munro's side to direct her attention towards Jack sitting in shadow beside Miss Munro. "One ud think they wor made for one another!"

"Plaise God," whispered Mrs. Munro in return, "they'll be man an' wife before many a year's out. It's the wish of my heart, God knows!"

"Whin that happins," said Mrs. Gallaher, squeezing her friend's hand again, "anyone that likes may carry me to my grave—amin! It's too happy I'd be to live."

During this conversation Mr. Munro stood with his back against the sideboard, his hands in his pockets, never taking his eyes off the new window.

Mr. Gallaher, who stood beside him, also gazed steadily at it.

"There's no doubt about it," said the latter. "It's the most wondherful piece of glass I've ivir seen' an' you ought to be proud of it."

"Sure, afther all," observed Mr. Munro with obvious hypocrisy, "it's only a bit o' glass. You can't make more out of it nor that!"

"Well, there's glass an' glass," remarked Mr. Gallaher, lifting his tumbler to his lips, "an' that's the finest stretch of glass I've ivir seen!"

"Ah, it's only because you're not used to it," suggested Mr. Munro, his eyes still riveted on it in fascination.

"You desarve great credit," observed Mr. Gallaher, "for your enterprise. The winda's a sign of great energy on your part an' a desire to improve your premises. Is it insured?"

For a moment Mr. Munro, taking his eyes from the window, glanced aside at his companion, puzzled at first.

"No, then," he replied, adding, "There's time enough. Anyhow, it's as safe as the Bank."

Through the babble of conversation in the coffee room came the sound of cheering and a rush of footsteps from the street. The youngsters of the town were jeering old Mrs. Mulligan, who had been forcibly ejected from Sheehan's public-house. Having stood a few minutes to curse Sheehan and all belonging to him, the old vagrant tramped determinedly up the street, escorted by the young people; two constables slowly pacing in the rear. When she turned the corner which let her into the open space before the "Horse and Car" she halted, her jaws

agape, her beadlike eyes staring at the grand new window. Then, bursting through the jeering crowd, she rushed to the Inn; raised her heavy, oak stick and rained furious blows on the glass until it fell in numberless splinters.

The coffee room resembled a graveyard as far as conversation went; for profound silence suddenly fell on all, as the terrible old woman outside battered the plate glass to pieces. It was all over in a few seconds; then the constables fell upon her and dragged her, shrieking and kicking, back along the street. Mrs. Munro had uttered one cry and fainted. Two men lifted her from the floor, staggering under the effort.

"Bring her upstairs!" shrieked Mrs. Gallaher, finding her voice, after a trance of horror. "Let her be in her own room with the neighbours that love an' worship her to tend on her whin she comes back to life. Bring her upstairs!" she exclaimed, louder, as the men hesitated. "Not here to let her eyes open on this scene of desolation and divilment!"

The men obeyed. Mechanically Mr. Munro stood aside as his unconscious wife was being borne away by the two staggering men; then, pressing his hand to his brows, stared, first at the gaping window, then at Mr. Gallaher.

"Was it bricks?" he asked; "or is it dynamite?"

"Nayther," answered Mr. Gallaher readily. "Only that ould divil of a Mrs. Mulligan. May God forgive her for bringin' such misery on you!"

"Aymin!" said all present.

Then Mr. Munro began to tap himself quickly

on the chest as if he had a sudden attack of palsy. He stretched his left hand towards Mr. Gallaher and gulped once or twice.

"Am I dead, or am I in a kind o' dhrame?" he inquired.

Mr. Gallaher solemnly shook his head at the sympathizing men who gathered round; but he said nothing.

"Give him a dhrop o' brandy," suggested one.

This suggestion, generally approved, proved impossible, owing to the clenched condition of Mr. Munro's teeth. He looked, indeed, as if about to have a fit. Meanwhile, Kate Munro, softly sobbing, had moved closer to Jack Gallaher, who, as he patted her on the shoulder and spoke gently to her, wished himself a long way off. The crowd without rapidly increased. Many who had not seen the window when whole now flocked to see its ruins until the entire townful seemed to be massed in the open space before the "Horse and Car," and the police barracks was emptied of every available man.

The Inn 'bus—driven by a sinister-faced man with a black patch over one eye—had arrived from the railway station without exciting attention. Its only occupant, a middle-aged, clean-shaven man, carrying a bag, now alighted, apparently amazed at the scene before him. When he mounted the steps of the Inn he accosted the first person who seemed to belong to the place, and asked for a bed. He was directed into the coffee room, where he found Mr. Munro unable to transact the slightest business. At sight of the stranger's dilemma, however, Kate went upstairs, where, in a small

private room her mother was stretched in a wicker arm-chair, with Mrs. Gallaher hovering over her like a guardian angel.

"What is the matther, Katie darling?" asked Mrs. Gallaher. "Hush, alannah, don't make a noise. Your sainted mother's only gettin' back to life."

"A man has come," replied Kate, sobbingly through the handkerchief she held to her lips. "He's an English tourist, he says, an' wants a bed."

"If it wor a sthranger," gasped Mrs. Munro as she rallied, "I might survive it. But one of my own flesh an' blood!"

"Nivir spake of her!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, indignantly. "Nivir mention the name of Mulligan agin as long as you live. It's burnt at the stake she ought to be, the wicked ould baste! The fires o' hell are too good for her! She can't be a relation of yours. I won't belave it!"

"She's my dead father's sister," moaned Mrs. Munro. "May God forgive her this day!"

As she now showed symptoms of relapsing, Mrs. Gallaher hastened to a cabinet, and, bringing out a black bottle, thrust it between her stricken friend's lips. There followed a gurgle and the aroma of whisky.

"Let love surround you to your dyin' day!" cried Mrs. Gallaher in an ecstasy of affection. "For it's an angel y'are to bear what you bear an' to suffer as you have suffered! For God's sake, thry an' rest a bit now. Thry an' rest your poor, wearied brain, acushla machree. Katie, darlin', what is it?"

As the others had paid no attention to her communication, Katie, who still stood near the door, holding it open with one hand and crushing the handkerchief to her eyes with the other, repeated her message.

"But where's your father, alannah?" demanded Mrs. Gallaher. "But, sure, I nadent ask. The poor man's overcome with grief an sorra this day. Is Jack downstairs, Katie, darlin'?"

Katie instantly cast down her eyes.

"He is," she replied, faintly.

"Sure, then, alannah, ask him to see afther the person that has come," suggested Mrs. Gallaher in her sweetest tones. "Jack'll stan' on his head if you ask him. There's no better lad in the length an' breadth of Ireland, and he's cliver enough to look afther the Inn for that matther. An' he must do it!" she exclaimed, with a fresh access of enthusiasm. "Tell him his mother says he's to do whativir's wanted, an' to lind a neighbour's hand to you an' yours in the hour of affliction."

The sudden brightening of Kate's eyes indicated that she approved of this advice. She hurried downstairs to hand over the care of the Inn to Jack Gallaher, but he had already disappeared, and the tourist was still standing patiently in the hall, his bag at his feet.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRIAL AND AFTER.

ON the morning of the trial of Mrs. Mulligan, Mrs. Gallaher, who had been summoned as witness, was scarcely able in her excitement to tie the strings of her best black bonnet. From time to time she had a misty vision of her round-shouldered husband going to and fro in the room. He raised the window and thrust out his head.

"Crowds an' crowds!" said he. "All goin' to the Coorthouse. It's little they want to see, anyhow. A poor ould crayture up before the magistrate for breakin' a pane o' glass."

"Plaise God she'll get five years' paynil sarvitude!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, putting her head on one side and staring at her bonnet bow in the looking-glass. "If I was on the binch, it's little marcy I'd show the dhrunken ould baste!"

"There goes the magistrate, Misther Fitzgerald, dhrivin' up in his carriage," observed Mr. Gallaher, his head and shoulders still thrust out. "Sure, what could the Munros expict, an' thim burstin' with pride over a bit o' glass! Johnnie Munro was scarcely able to spake to me at first with the pride of him, an' whin the winda was broke he was like an ijit."

"It's aisily seen that you think more of a dirty ould thramp," said Mrs. Gallaher indignantly, "a disgrace to her sex an' the town she was born in—it's aisily seen you think more of her than the honist, hardworkin' people she's brought sufferin' an' sorra to. But, thank God, everyone's not made like you!"

"I don't like to see people too stuck up about nothin'," remarked Mr. Gallaher more subduedly. "There's Misther Fitzgerald gone up into the Coorthouse, but the carriage has dhriven away with Miss Fitzgerald in it. I suppose she'll come back for him whin the coort rises. There's more an' more people comin.' Glory be to God, it's little they have to do! I think I'll go down myself an' see if I can get in."

To this observation his wife paid no attention, but remarking that she was "goin' across for Mrs. Munro" hastily left the room.

The Munros, with some friends, were already on the Inn steps in their best attire; Mr. Munro looking very self-conscious in a shining silk hat; his wife in black satin, gazing anxiously across towards Gallaher's Stores; and Miss Munro, with bent head, buttoning on a pair of long cream-coloured gloves. With her left hand clutching her dress behind, by way of holding up her train, and her right held to the side of her bonnet, Mrs. Gallaher raced across the open space and joined the group.

Although a large number were refused admission, owing to the crowded condition of the court, Mr. Gallaher, as one of the chief business men of the town, managed to obtain standing room under the gallery. He saw every seat occupied; the reporters

busy at their table under the bench, and Mr. Casey of the *Flashlight* conspicuously standing up from time to time to glare round at everyone. A thin, fresh-faced gentleman, with closely-cropped grey hair, presently appeared and took his seat on the bench. It was Mr. Fitzgerald, the magistrate, and silence fell upon the breathless court. A few ordinary cases were quickly dealt with, and then Mrs. Mulligan passed into the dock.

All eyes were strained to gaze upon her, but in that crowded court she was apparently the least concerned. Before the charge was declared there was a pause so deep that the buzzing of a blue-bottle against a dusty pane in the gallery sounded loudly through the place. Holding on to a pillar now slippery with hot moisture, Mr. Gallaher stood on tiptoe to get a glimpse of the prisoner, the effort making him gasp in the stifling atmosphere. The charge was announced and Mrs. Gallaher was called as witness. Again, her husband, lifting himself up from the impact of those about him, stood on his toes, and again let himself down with a gasp. During the silence that ensued, while Mrs. Gallaher solemnly undid the strings of her bonnet, the blue-bottle was heard again.

"Yis, sir," said Mrs. Gallaher quickly, in answer to the Crown prosecutor. "I saw the smashin' of the winda, an' I saw the vile ould reprobate" —nodding at the immovable face of Mrs. Mulligan —"that did the deed——"

"The witness," interrupted Mr. Fitzgerald, "must give her evidence without making personal reflections on the prisoner."

Mrs. Gallaher, however, was encouraged to

wander on by the fact that the clerk had passed up a letter to the magistrate, who read it over very slowly.

"It was the brokin heart of Mrs. Munro," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, with a look of triumph round the court, which she now held unchallenged, "an' not the brokin glass that sthruck home to my feelin's. For there's not in the town of Carrigmore a thendherer or thruer woman than Mrs. Munro, an' to see her tortured by an ould Bedlamite——"

"Stand down," said the solicitor to Mrs. Gallaher, as he caught Mr. Fitzgerald's eye, and Mrs. Gallaher, with a look of indignation, resumed her seat.

"Prisoner," said Mr. Fitzgerald, gazing fixedly at the cast-iron face of the old woman, "have you anything to say in your defence?"

She made no reply, but merely stared back at the magistrate without the faintest change of expression. After a reasonable pause, Mr. Fitzgerald continued:

"I am afraid you are a very hardened case. You have been convicted twenty-seven times in this court for being drunk and disorderly, and you are now accused, and accused truthfully, of serious damage to property—the property of one who is generally respected in this town, and who has the great misfortune to be a relation of your own. In the ordinary course I should send you to hard labour; but there is a gentleman here in court" —all eyes suddenly turned on the English tourist who was seated next the reporters' table, leaning back, with his hands in his pockets and staring at the ceiling—"who has undertaken to be responsible

for your good behaviour in future; and who, in addition, is prepared, at his own expense, to replace the valuable window you so wantonly destroyed. Under these circumstances you are dismissed."

The storm of excited conversation which almost immediately rose from the amazed spectators, who began to rise in all directions, was not to be stilled even by the sergeant's sternest yell for silence. Then the magistrate rose, the doors were thrown open, and the people began slowly to find their way out. It was not until the court was comparatively clear that the prisoner, taking her gaze from space, fixed her eyes for the first time on the stranger who had so unexpectedly delivered her from jail. Half a dozen persons still remained in the gallery, leaning over to watch her. The magistrate had left the court, the police were outside, and the clerk was tying up his last bundle of blue papers. Through the murmur of the crowd without, the angry buzzing of the fat fly on the upper window could now be heard. At last Mr. Pepper, the tourist, rose and shook out his legs.

"You had better come with me now," said he.

"Not till I get my stick," returned Mrs. Mulligan stolidly, "and the pipe they tuk from me."

Having slowly descended from the dock, she turned from the stranger and glared at the sergeant-in-charge.

"What does she mean?" asked Mr. Pepper.

"What's wrong wud you now?" shouted the sergeant roughly to the old woman. "What d'you want?"

"My pipe an' stick," she repeated stubbornly.

"Here's your ould stick," said the sergeant,

lifting it from the solicitors' table and handing it to her. "I don't know anything about your pipe."

"It was tuk from me at the station," said she, without moving, "an' the divil a stir I'll stir without it."

"Can I get her a new one?" asked Mr. Pepper, who now understood her.

"A new one!" she exclaimed indignantly. "I'd rather have the ould dhudeen than a pipe med of silver or goold!"

"It's a dirty ould clay pipe," explained the sergeant. "There's no one in Ireland ud smoke it except herself. I suppose it's at the barracks. She can get it there if she calls for it."

"I won't stir——" began Mrs. Mulligan again, when Mr. Pepper approached her.

"We can get it on the way back," he suggested suavely. "You're coming with me, you know. You surely don't expect anyone to bring it to you here? Besides, even if you had it now, you couldn't smoke it."

This reasoning seemed to calm her rising wrath. Turning, she walked past the sergeant—who made a grimace of disgust—and out of the door, the English stranger following quickly. Outside, the police were drawn up in force. Mr. Pepper, looking over Mrs. Mulligan's battered bonnet, saw a crowd of eager faces, and was stunned by the universal howl of execration which greeted his companion. Just as he passed out at Mrs. Mulligan's heels, he was touched on the shoulder and saw the sergeant's face beside him.

"You'll be all right, sir," observed the latter.

"They'll only groan the old woman. We'll see you safe to the 'Horse an' Car.'"

"Thank you," said Mr. Pepper. "But I'm not in the least afraid."

"Of coorse not," returned the sergeant shortly. "But we are."

As Mrs. Mulligan now doggedly plodded on, she was greeted on all sides by howls and jeering remarks, but these had no effect whatever on her. She made her way without change of expression—even when a sod of turf struck the top of her bonnet—until she reached the police barracks, where she deliberately halted and looked back significantly at the sergeant. Here she stood, her clawlike hands resting on the top of her stick, facing the yelling crowd with unflinching eyes, until a constable hurried in to fetch the pipe. Only once did she change expression that day, and it was when the constable handed her a little black clay pipe. Then she smiled until the tip of her nose nearly met her chin and her deep-set eyes disappeared in wrinkles. Having placed the pipe in her bosom, she resumed her stolidity and marched on. The police, keeping close around the gentleman and the old tramp, accompanied them to the "Horse and Car," where the crowd halted, sending a last derisive cheer after Mrs. Mulligan as she entered the hall.

So far she had led the way. Now, in the hall, she sat down on an oaken bench and looked calmly up at Mr. Pepper, who, having put his cap in his pocket, looked about him. A large number of persons were passing into the bar where Mr. Munro, perspiring in his shirt sleeves, and assisted by his

daughter Kate, was handing out drink and taking in money as fast as he could wish.

Stepping to the door of the coffee room—again in twilight owing to the boarded window—Mr. Pepper called out :

" Is Mrs. Munro there ? "

But it was Mrs. Gallaher who instantly detached herself from the throng of sympathizers around the landlady and advanced.

" She is, sir," she replied ; " but, indade, quite unable to attind to you at prisint. The heart of her is wake, God knows, an' the power of her breath laves her. Can I do anything for you, sir ? "

" I only wanted to know," said the gentleman, " if I can have a room for Mrs. Mulligan ? "

" For who ? " exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, whilst all those in the coffee room turned about and stared. " Who did you say, sir ? "

" For this old woman here," explained Mr. Pepper, stepping aside to allow Mrs. Gallaher and the rest to see Mrs. Mulligan seated, her hands folded on top of her oak stick and her pipe in her mouth.

" Glory be to God ! " cried Mrs. Gallaher in a frenzy of indignant amazement. " Is that where y'are, you audacious ould blaggard ? How dar you, how dar you defile this place, afther all the misery an' sufferin' you've brought on the innicint head of her that has the misfortune to be related to you ? Sir," she added, turning to Mr. Pepper, " it's aisy seein' you're a stranger. But you ought to know enough from what you've seen of that wicked ould divil, to know that she's not fit to be undher the same roof wud dacent Christians."

There was a murmur of applause from the people in the coffee room, endorsed by those who had gathered in the hall during this conversation.

"But it is absolutely necessary," explained Mr. Pepper, "for me to keep her under observation. I don't want to lose sight of her."

At these mysterious words the people looked at one another.

"I dunno what you want wud her or what you mane at all," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, "but she won't stay here!"

With his brows wrinkled in perplexity, the Englishman turned and looked at the old woman.

"Sure, she has no more to do with the place," said Mrs. Mulligan to him, "than you have yourself."

At this cool reminder Mrs. Gallaher grew fiery red, and her eyes started with indignation; and she turned to glance over her shoulder at Mrs. Munro, who was seated in an exhausted condition in the coffee room.

"Did you hear that, ma'am?" said Mrs. Gallaher to the landlady. "But, no! God forbid you'd listen to her. Is it your will, ma'am, that Mrs. Mulligan should remain undher this roof afther what she's done?"

Sitting up, Mrs. Munro solemnly moved her head from side to side.

"I nivir want to see her," said she, "or hear of her agin, nivir agin!"

"There's your answer now," said Mrs. Gallaher to Mr. Pepper. "Let her get out of this now and the sooner the better. It's sacrilege to have her here!"

Again there was a murmur of approval, and several men offered to fling Mrs. Mulligan down the steps—a menace that had no more effect on the old woman than a breath of wind on her face.

"Oh, but she must stay here!" exclaimed the Englishman, with a startling air of determination. "Where's Mr. Munro? Are you there, Mr. Munro?"

As he shouted this question down the passage Mr. Munro himself came hurrying up from the bar, and became, with the tourist, the centre of an excited group.

"See here, Mr. Munro," explained Mr. Pepper, "I want this old creature to have a room here—any sort of a den, I suppose, will do her. I'll pay any sum you mention in advance. If you can't manage it, of course, she'll have to go somewhere else, and I'll go too."

"Oh, you'll go too, sir?" repeated Mr. Munro alarmed. "You'll go too, will you?"

Plunging his hand into his pocket, Mr. Pepper drew it forth full of more gold than silver.

"Look here, Mr. Munro," said he, "put it on as thick as you like. I'll pay money down."

At sight of the coins Mr. Munro's little eyes glittered, and the people, more and more amazed at the Englishman's strange interest in the old woman, stared again at one another.

"Well, sir," observed Mr. Munro, "if you'll excuse me, I'll just step in an' have a word wud the missis."

Thrusting his way into the coffee room, he remained for some minutes there, holding animated conversation, mostly in whispers, with his wife.

When he came out again he stood before Mr. Pepper, rubbing his hands together.

"She can have the attic, sir," said he, "for the prisint, anyhow."

"Thank you!" said Mr. Pepper coldly. "And now will you have her taken up there, and let her have something to eat and drink?"

"Sartinly, sir," assented Mr. Munro, who went immediately down the passage, shouting, "Mary Ann! Are you there, Mary Ann?"

Then Mr. Pepper turned towards Mrs. Mulligan.

"You'll stay here, won't you?" said he. "You are to have the attic for the present, and I have ordered something for you to eat and drink. I suppose you'd like something to eat and drink?"

"I'd like something to dhrink," she replied, gazing firmly up at him.

"All right," said he. "What would you like?"

She took her pipe from her mouth and wet her lips with her tongue.

"Whisky," she replied.

"Whisky it shall be," he returned, and then the listening group winked at each other and covertly put the tips of their fingers to their foreheads.

When Mary Ann, the brawny kitchen-maid, appeared, she squared her red elbows and looked down aggressively at the old woman.

"Come up wud me to the attic," said she.

Gazing down at the floor, Mrs. Mulligan made no sign.

"D'you hear me, you ould baste?" cried Mary Ann, with rising voice.

As Mrs. Mulligan made no rejoinder, Mr. Pepper stepped anxiously forward.

" You'll go up with her," he suggested gently to the old woman ; adding to Mary Ann, " you might treat her a bit more kindly, you know."

" Ay, she's so kind to everyone else," said Mary Ann, with a toss of her tangled hair.

At the sound of the Englishman's voice Mrs. Mulligan stood up, and, without another word, followed Mary Ann to the attic.

CHAPTER IV.

CASEY MAKES HIMSELF AT HOME.

As all this conversation had been carried on through the clatter of footsteps and the sounds from the noisy bar, Mr. Pepper was glad to go upstairs to his own room, close the door, and stretch himself on a sofa. He had just begun to enjoy the first pleasant sensation of relaxation when there was a quick knock without.

"Come in!" he called.

A reddish-haired, pallid-faced little man in long black coat, carrying a shabby silk hat, entered. Sitting slowly up, Mr. Pepper looked the visitor inquiringly up and down,

"Good evenin', Mr. Pepper," observed the latter cheerfully, placing his hat on the table and drawing forward a chair.

"Good evening," returned Mr. Pepper coldly.

"I sippose I nadent inthroduce myself?" said the visitor with a short, satisfied laugh, as he seated himself and crossed his knees comfortably. "You know me, I presoom?"

Resting back again on the sofa, Mr. Pepper looked thoughtfully at the other.

"I do not," he replied.

"Well, I sippose you may not know my persinal

appearance," observed the visitor, rising and drawing a couple of newspapers from the tail pocket of his greasy frock-coat, " although my photo has appeared in some of the English papers. But, my name's Casey."

Knitting his brow, Mr. Pepper put the tips of his right fingers to his chin and seemed perplexed.

" Casey ? " said he. " Casey ? "

" Ah ! I thought you'd recognize the name ! " exclaimed Mr. Casey, tapping the folded papers. " Did you rade my latest editorial ? "

" Oh, you are an editor ? " returned Mr. Pepper, enlightened. " No, Mr. Casey, I have not read your editorial."

" Nivir mind ; I kin undherstand," observed Mr. Casey, tossing the papers across to him. " There you have a couple of copies of the *Flashlight* you kin scan at your laysure. I'll just rade an extract to show my style."

" Wait a moment," said Mr. Pepper, pulling at the old-fashioned bell-rope which dangled beside him. " You'll have something to drink, won't you ? Are you a teetotaller ? "

" Not to my knowledge," answered Mr. Casey frankly.

Putting on his spectacles and taking another copy of the *Flashlight*—this time from his breast pocket—he started reading in a strenuous voice :

" ' We are not surprised to hear that Munro's brand new glass window was smashed yesterday evening. The pity of it is, that Munro's baboon-like face was left intact. He now clearly understands the consequence of having married the niece

of Mrs. Mulligan, that hoary-headed old reprobate, who——'"

Further reading was interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Munro himself in response to the bell.

"Excuse me, Mr. Casey," said Mr. Pepper. "What is your favourite drink?"

"Whisky," replied Mr. Casey, unhesitatingly; then, turning in his seat, he glared over his spectacles at the Innkeeper who stood, open mouthed, in his shirt-sleeves. "An' none o' your pisin, Munro, on this occasion. Rimimber that!"

Rising and crossing to the Innkeeper, Mr. Pepper gave his order in a low voice, returning to the sofa as Mr. Munro obsequiously backed out.

"Mr. Casey," said he with a slight, apologetic bow, "will you excuse me interrupting you? But I don't like to spoil the pleasure of reading your excellent editorial. You don't mind—do you?—my reserving that pleasure?"

"Sartinly not!" assented Mr. Casey, with a flattered smile as he folded up the *Flashlight* and returned it tenderly to his bosom. "But you kin see from the little that I've read, that I don't write with kid gloves. I'm purty well known, not only in Carrigmore, but across the wather. You may rekillect, that extracts were read from my editorials in the House of Commins, sir, last session?"

"I have a wretched, bad memory," said Mr. Pepper, "and don't take much interest in politics. But, now that you mention it, I think I do recollect something of the sort. It created a sensation in London, I think?"

Mr. Casey proudly struck his hand on the table.

"I should think it did, sir!" he exclaimed. "It came as a revilation afther the milk-an'-water of the London press! I hope you don't think me egotistical?"

"Oh, you are quite right to place a high value on yourself," answered Mr. Pepper. "The public always take a man at his own valuation."

"I kin let you have a few dozen copies of the *Flashlight*," observed Mr. Casey generously, "to disthribute among your influential friends in London. You come from London, don't you?"

Mr. Pepper, who was sitting with his arms folded, cautiously watching his guest, nodded a cold response.

"I thought so!" said Mr. Casey with a confident laugh. "I'm not aisily desaved!"

Mr. Munro now appeared bearing decanter and glasses. Whilst the Innkeeper arranged these things on the table, Mr. Casey sat back with his hands linked behind his head and glared at him sternly, but Mr. Munro was in a placable mood and kept his face downcast.

"I think that will do, sir?" said Mr. Munro appealing to the host.

Mr. Pepper surveyed the tray for a moment or two without speaking; then nodded approval.

"Yes," said he, "very good."

"'Very good!' That remains to be seen!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, seizing the decanter and pouring out a half-tumblerful which he carefully tasted. "Ay," he added, smacking his lips, "it's betther than usual. You kin go now, Munro."

Thus dismissed, Mr. Munro rubbed his hands together, grinned amiably, and softly withdrew.

"Now, Mr. Casey," observed Mr. Pepper, rising and taking up position with his back to the fire-place and his hands under his coat-tails, "I don't drink myself, but I hope you will help yourself."

"Bedad, I will!" said Mr. Casey. "And now, sir, since I find you so generous and open-hearted, I want to give you a bit of advice."

"I am always open to receive advice," returned Mr. Pepper.

"The advice I give you," observed Mr. Casey, turning towards him from the table, "is, get out of this Inn as soon as you can."

Mr. Pepper slightly raised his thin eyebrows.

"But this is the best Inn in the town," said he. "Where am I to go?"

"Anywhere is betther than here," said Mr. Casey sternly. "D'you want to be robbed an' chated till you haven't a brass farden left?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pepper. "No man does."

"Very good, my friend. I sippose you have a fair amount of money? 'You same," said Mr. Casey as he raised the tumbler slowly towards his mouth, "to be able to spind plinty of good money on foolish whims."

"I can afford it," returned Mr. Pepper. "I am not wealthy. But I can spend a few pounds without beggaring myself."

The small, reddish-brown eyes of the editor glinted and expanded. He drank in thoughtful silence.

"Anyhow," he remarked, as he laid down the

tumbler, "I want to put you on your guard agin the Munros. Have they given you a bad egg for your breakfist up to the presint?"

Looking thoughtfully on the floor, Mr. Pepper felt his smooth chin with his right hand.

"Well, really," he replied, "that does not strike me as a very important matter. To the best of my recollection, yes—I have had one since I arrived."

"Exactly!" exclaimed Mr. Casey striking the table; "an' you'll find it charged in your bill as if it was a good one! It's thim small things that I want you to guard against; because they mount up; and it's all Munro's system. That's the way he scrapes the shillin's together. He's the greatest money-grubber an' cheeseparer in Carrigmore. Have you bin sarved with an account yet?"

"Not yet," replied Mr. Pepper with some impatience.

"Whin y'are," observed Mr. Casey, bending towards him and pointing a forefinger over the decanter, "let me see it before you pay it, will you?"

"Thank you," said Mr. Pepper, "I shall consider your suggestion."

"I'll show you," explained Mr. Casey with a very cunning expression, "where the fardens an' hay-pennies an' sixpences are tacked on. I know the Munros an' you don't. Munro's nothin' but a pirate an' highwayman. Don't lave any valuables lyin' about. An' his wife's as bad as himself."

"It's very kind of you to tell me all this," said Mr. Pepper, looking pointedly at his watch. "I shall be on my guard."

"What's the manin' of this business about that ould divil, Mrs. Mulligan?" asked Mr. Casey with candid curiosity. "What put such a notion into your head? 'Responsible for her good conduct?' You might as well make yourself responsible for the divil himself!"

Looking down, Mr. Pepper seemed trying to discover the original pattern in the worn carpet as he rubbed his leathern watch-guard between his finger and thumb.

"Well, I suppose," he explained, looking up calmly at Mr. Casey's eager face, "it is in my blood. I had an uncle who wrote a work on Criminology. I take an interest in abnormal persons. It may be absurd; but there it is. I can afford to experiment with this old lady. It's no harm."

"Well, it's no harm," assented Mr. Casey, looking at him with astonishment; "but it's divilish silly. Rale, downright waste of money! Now, I'll tell you what—a few hundred pounds put into the *Flashlight*——"

The door was suddenly opened and Mary Ann thrusting in her unkempt head looked at Mr. Pepper and exclaimed:

"Mrs. Mulligan wants to see you, sir!"

"You will excuse me, Mr. Casey," observed Mr. Pepper as he crossed immediately to the door. "You see, my experiment has begun. But don't let my absence interfere with you."

Without waiting for a rejoinder, he went out; and Mr. Casey was left alone with his meditations and the decanter.

Following the kitchen-maid, who was feeling her left arm and groaning with pain, Mr. Pepper

entered a long, narrow room, where there were several old crates around the mildewed walls, baskets of waste paper and corks, and the remains of an ancient iron bedstead in a corner. There were several persons here, including Mrs. Gallaher, and they were all looking towards the attic door, which was approached by a squat ladder of four steps. On the top step sat Mrs. Mulligan, her square face set in stern resolution, an old, cracked bonnet hanging at the back of her neck and her grey hair falling about her eyes. She was smoking the little black clay pipe, and the oaken stick—which had recently defended the attic against Mary Ann—was lying gripped across her knees. She was, to all appearance, at bay. On one of the empty crates Mrs. Munro sat, audibly weeping. In front of her stood Mrs. Gallaher, her face aflame with righteous rage; and she shook her fists at the immovable woman above.

"Come down, you disgrace!" cried Mrs. Gallaher. "Come down owt o' that an' lave this dacent house an' the woman that you have persecuted an' defamed till the heart of her is sick an' sore with sorra! I won't go to bed this night till I see you out of the house; for you're a black plague on it an' on thim that's in it! I'll dhrag you down with my bare hands!"

At this threat, uttered in a rising scream, Mrs. Mulligan merely spat with an air of contempt behind her hand and stuck her pipe again into her mouth. Apparently maddened at this callousness, Mrs. Gallaher made a dash for the ladder, but was arrested by the firm hand of Mr. Pepper on her shoulder.

"What is the matter here?" he asked.

"Matther, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, turning to him. "It's well you may ask, an' you the cause of bringin' misery an' black sorra on that innicint woman there that's sobbin' her big heart out. It's well you may ask whin you see that ould criminal sated up there spittin' in the face of honist, respictible people!"

Rising with a groan Mrs. Munro came forward, and, taking the handkerchief from her face, struck her open hand on her broad bosom; at the same time turning up her eyes to the cracked and weather-stained ceiling.

"I wouldn't mind it, sir," said she apologetically to Mr. Pepper, "but Mrs. Gallaher here an' myself were down in the coffee room, an' Mrs. Gallaher smelt the smell of burnin'. Sure, sir, it's afeared I am she'll burn the house down in the night with that ould pipe of hers, for she nivir knows whin she dhrops aslape wud it in her gums, an' maybe scattherin' the live ashes about the bed."

"I smelt the smell," cried Mrs. Gallaher triumphantly, "of burnin', an' I'll not have Mrs. Munro's house burnt down before my eyes without raisin' my voice an' lettin' the truth be known!"

Looking from the excited face of Mrs. Gallaher to the doleful one of Mrs. Munro, Mr. Pepper reflectively scratched his chin.

"But, has she ever burned any place?" he asked Mrs. Munro.

"Not that I know of, sir," she replied. "But there's no sayin' what she might do."

"An' what she would do," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, frantically shaking a fist at the old

woman, "if she dar'd. She's divil enough for any badness!"

"Then," observed Mr. Pepper to Mrs. Munro, "if she has lived so long and never set fire to any place, is it likely she is going to set fire to your house?"

"Of coorse," responded Mrs. Munro with a sigh, "there's raisin in what you say."

Stamping her foot, Mrs. Gallaher, with a determined air, folded her arms.

"Out of this house she'll go!" she exclaimed.

Mr. Pepper turned to her.

"Excuse me," said he, "I have paid for her room a week in advance. You can't shove the old creature out like that you know."

Here a diversion was caused by Mrs. Mulligan herself, and there was silence as all turned to look at her. Standing up and taking the pipe from her mouth, she rested her hands on the top of the oaken stick.

"If it's your will, sir," said she, addressing Mr. Pepper, "I'll go. An' if it's your will, I'll stay."

"It's my will," said Mr. Pepper firmly, "that you should stay."

"Then, stay I will!" said the old woman.

Stepping back into the attic she closed the door; and, as they heard her shoot the bolt within, they looked at each other in silent surprise, and all went away save Mrs. Munro, Mrs. Gallaher, and Mr. Pepper. Mrs. Munro remained standing before him in subdued attitude, but Mrs. Gallaher sat down on a crate and stiffly folded her arms.

"Pray do not suppose, Mrs. Munro," said Mr. Pepper, "that I am indifferent to the possibility

of fire. It is a very serious danger. Has she any light inside ? "

" She has not, sir," replied Mrs. Munro ; " but you kin hear her sthrikin' matches the whole live-long night. Her pipe's always goin' out, an' she's always lightin' it."

Turning to look at the closed door of the attic, Mr. Pepper thrust both hands into the pockets of his jacket, and looked thoughtfully down with knit brows.

" That will never do," said he. " We must minimize the danger of fire. By the way," suddenly turning to survey the lumber room, now gradually becoming invisible in the fading daylight, " could you not fix her up a bed here to-morrow ? It would be more accessible, wouldn't it ? "

" Of coorse, sir," assented Mrs. Munro ; " she kin have this place if you're willin' to pay for it, an' have made up your mind that's she's to stay."

" Oh, I have fully made up my mind on that point," said he ; and Mrs. Gallaher, in hope of further information, assumed an alert attitude. " I must keep her under observation. Another thing," he added as he turned to leave, " she must get a hot bath and some better clothes."

" Very well, sir," returned Mrs. Munro. " If it's your whim an' you're willin' to pay for it, there's no more to be said. I'll have this place fixed up for her in the mornin'."

" Thank you," said he. " Good afternoon ! "

With that he quietly departed, making his way up to his bedroom to avoid Mr. Casey.

The latter, having finished the decanter, had

gradually sunk in an insensible condition to the floor. Here Mr. Munro, at a late hour, discovered him, and, with his slippered feet, kicked him for some minutes about the room. Above, in bed, Mr. Pepper heard the thuds and smothered groans, but, tired after the day's turmoil, soon fell asleep to dream that Mrs. Mulligan had set the Inn ablaze. He was awakened in the morning by strange noises in his room. Sitting up, he saw a wild-haired, haggard man noisily drinking from the water-jug. It was Mr. Casey, who, when he had quenched his thirst, emptied the remainder of the water into the basin, and, having plunged his face therein, scrubbed himself with a towel. Thus engaged he met the astonished eyes of Mr. Pepper.

"I dunno what happened to me," explained Mr. Casey hoarsely, tossing the towel into a corner. "Was I in a fight last night? I fell off the sofa an' got up agin' an' fell off an' got——"

Suddenly pausing, he seized the water-jug again and drained the dregs. Then he rolled his reddened eyes at Mr. Pepper and gasped:

"There's a fire in my inside," said he.

"Mr. Casey," observed Mr. Pepper in his coldest tones, "you do not seem to be aware that this is my bedroom."

"Do you take me for a fool?" said Mr. Casey, reproachfully. "I know where I am right enough. An' that reminds me," he added, sitting down on the bed, "you mustn't stay in this death-thrap. I know a dacint widda woman kin let you have a bedroom an' use of a sittin' room for six shillin's a week."

Sliding out of bed on the opposite side to Mr.

Casey, Mr. Pepper proceeded hurriedly to dress himself.

"I am obliged to you," he remarked, "for your consideration, but I mean to stay here, having paid three weeks in advance."

Mr. Casey, who had been showing an inclination to cool his burning forehead in the pillows, sat up and rolled his eyes.

"Then, bedad, you're a bigger fool than I thought," he observed; adding dolefully, as he put his hand to his forehead, "I don't mane that, an' you're not to take me up because ivry bone in my body's achin', let alone my head burstin'. How I'm to write a laydin' article to-day, I dunno. But the public have no pity. They must have their *Flashlight*, even though the head of the editor's burstin'."

"I'm not an expert in such matters," said Mr. Pepper stiffly, as he fastened on his collar before the looking-glass, "but I believe men in your condition sometimes take a brandy and soda."

"You're the sowl of ginirosity!" exclaimed Mr. Casey huskily, as he rose and pulled the bell-rope. "Nivir tell me agin that there aren't Englishmen as good as the best to be found in Irish Ireland."

Mr. Munro appearing was ordered in peremptory tones by Mr. Casey to bring up the drink, which he did speedily.

"Munro," exclaimed Mr. Casey fiercely, "is that brandy you have or pisin?"

As Mr. Munro deposited the tray on a small round table, he looked over his shoulder towards Mr. Pepper and smiled, with his teeth gripping his

lower lip—the smile which always enraged Mr. Casey.

"Misther Casey," he observed, "thinks I have designs on his life. But, sure, I wouldn't hurt a hair of his head."

"Moryah!" ejaculated Mr. Casey significantly. "Wouldn't you? I know you. I haven't lived in the same town with you, Munro, for forty years without knowing you. You won't get much marcy from me. I write the truth an' I spake the truth. You pisined that whisky last night."

Again Mr. Munro smiled his pale smile, shrugged his shoulders, and passed out of the room rubbing one hand over the other. By this time, Mr. Pepper, having finished his toilet, declared that he was about to descend to breakfast, and Mr. Casey, nerved by the brandy and soda, generously offered to accompany him.

Twenty minutes later Mr. Munro was standing in the doorway, awaiting the arrival of the Inn 'bus from the railway station, when he was touched on the shoulder and found Mr. Pepper standing beside him.

"See here, Mr. Munro," observed Mr. Pepper. "I have left Mr. Casey at breakfast, and I have no objection to his finishing it. But he must, on no account, come here again. You understand?"

"Troth, I do, sir!" assented Mr. Munro heartily. "There's a man in the stableyard, his name's O'Neil. They call him the Slogger, for he was a tirrible powerful prize-fighter whin he was a young man, an' I find him useful whin gintlemen get obsthreperous at the bar. He'll look after Misther Casey, I promise you!"

"Very good," said Mr. Pepper. "It's a matter I leave entirely in your hands."

He descended the steps and made towards the post office, whilst Mr. Munro hurried to the stable-yard.

Mr. Casey was still busy over the rashers, eggs, and tea, when the door was opened and a low-sized, bull-necked man with a black patch over one eye and a red muffler about his throat, came in. Instantly Mr. Casey, with a face full of terror, stood up and looked about for his hat, which he found in a crushed condition under the sofa.

"If you lay a hand on me, O'Neil!" he exclaimed tremblingly, as he thrust a fist up the hat to smooth it out, "I'll have you arrested. Mind that, now! I'm goin' out of this at once, for I have a laydin' article to write an' I want no physical vilence!"

There was no change of expression in the Slogger's thick face at these words. He merely thrust a huge fist against the door to open it wider, and let Mr. Casey glide past him. Once in the open, Mr. Casey, putting on his battered hat, and standing in the centre of the Market Square, faced round to the Inn.

"I'll make you pay for this, Munro!" he shouted, white with rage. "I'll drag you through the mud! I'll——"

He was still shaking his fist and shouting when the sudden appearance of Mr. O'Neil in the doorway caused him to turn and make swiftly down the street.

CHAPTER V.

A REVELATION.

"BEDAD, this bates all the laydin' articles I ivir read!" exclaimed Mr. Gallaher, looking up from the remains of a late dinner at his wife, who was preparing to clear the table. "Lis'en to this," and he read slowly from the current issue of the *Flashlight:*

"DASTARDLY OUTRAGE IN CARRIGMORE.—When We accepted the courteous offer of the cultured English gentleman, Mr. Pepper, to breakfast at the 'Horse and Car,' We little thought that during his temporary absence We should be interrupted in Our repast by the aggressive presence of that human bulldog, Slogger O'Neil. A little reflection, however, might have told Us that there is no depths of blaguardism too deep for that unspeakable ruffian, Johnnie Munro. It is just and equitable that he should have now, under his roof, the vilest old tramp in Ireland, to wit, his wife's aunt, the notorious Mrs. Mulligan——"

"That'll do!" interrupted Mrs. Gallaher impatiently. "Don't let us have any more of that stuff. Though, at the same time, I must say, the

Munros nivir made a bigger mistake than to let that ould wretch, Mrs. Mulligan, under their roof. That Englishman is as mad as a hatter, an' he's amusin' himself at the ixpense of Mrs. Munro's good, honist heart. But he won't have his way long, if I can help it!"

"It's the quarest thing I ivir heard," remarked Mr. Gallaher, looking over the paper again at his wife. "Sure there must be some manin' or saycrit of some sort behind it all."

"The divil a saycrit there is," returned Mrs. Gallaher, lifting the dishes towards the door. "Only an Englishman havin' a laugh at thim up his sleeve."

"I happened to be in the Post Office yestherda," observed Jack, who was seated near the window, "I dhropped in for a stamp."

"An' what happened there, achushla?" asked his mother.

"Only that Misther Pepper came in," explained Jack, "an' wrote out a telegram that caught the corner of my eye."

Coming back, and placing the dishes on the table again, his mother looked at him over his father's bald head.

"Yis!" said she. "An' did you see what he was writin,' Jack darlin'?"

"Well, I couldn't help seein' it," answered Jack, reddening. "It was to someone in London, an' it said, 'I have found her.' That's all."

Sitting down on a chair with her back against the wall and her hands on her knees, Mrs. Gallaher gazed, in silence for a moment, from her son to her husband.

"I see it all now," said she. "An' I had my suspicions all along. Mrs. Mulligan's committed some crime—murdher, for all I know—an' Misther Pepper's a detective! That's the whole saycrit as plain as a pikestaff!"

The silence which followed was broken by the familiar voice of Kate Munro from the front door.

"Are you there, Mrs. Gallaher?"

With light foot Mrs. Gallaher came quickly out and found Kate just outside the doorway in bare head, having raced across from the Inn.

"Indade I am, darlin'," said Mrs. Gallaher, putting her arm round the girl's shoulder and kissing her on the cheek. "An' rale glad I am to see you. Won't you come in?"

"Ah, no thanks," responded Kate, glancing expectantly towards the shop. "I haven't time. Mother wants to know if you'll come over for a few minutes. Mrs. Mulligan's to get a hot bath. How's Jack?"

"In troth, I'll go over within ten minutes," assented Mrs. Gallaher, always admiringly studying Kate's fresh face. "I know too well the thrubble that's on your poor mother, an' the void in her heart of her for a neighbour's help an' guidance, God help her! She has a bitther pill to swalla. Jack's very well, darlin'. Won't you come in an' see him?"

Kate's cheeks flushed as her eyes dropped.

"I only just asked how he was," said she. "He didn't seem very lively yestherda."

Drawing her closer, Mrs. Gallaher put her lips to the girl's blushing ear.

"How kin you expect him to be lively," said she,

" an' he head an' ears in love with you ? Sure, he's always singin' your praises in saisin an' out of saisin."

" Ah, go on now ! " returned Kate. " I don't belave a word of that. He doesn't care a thraneen for me."

Throwing up her hands, Mrs. Gallaher stepped back in the doorway and surveyed the girl with amazed eyes.

" Not care for you ! " she exclaimed ; then, in a confidential tone : " Sure, darlin', I'll tell you the long an' short of it—Jack's shy. There, now ! I've tould you a great saycrit." Turning her head, she shouted down the passage, " Jack ! Are you there, Jack ? Here's someone wants to see you."

" Oh, no ! " protested Kate, blushing again. " I don't want to see him. Don't say that, Mrs. Gallaher ; I only kem across with mother's messige."

" Sure, I know, darlin'," said Mrs. Gallaher, with maternal tenderness. " But he'd be vexed if you went away an' he didn't get a look at you. He's down in the parlour gettin' his fishin'-rods ready. Are you there, Jack ? " she cried again.

" Goin' fishin', is he ? " asked Kate, with much interest.

" Ay, troth. He's mad about fishin'," replied Mrs. Gallaher. " An' the quare thing about it is, he seldom sames to catch anything. But, maybe, the fish aren't bitin' this weather. Are you there, Jack ? "

Very slowly and reluctantly Jack came up, his fishing-rod in hand, basket on back, and cap on the side of his curly head. As he came along the passage he seemed so handsome to Kate Munro, that her

bosom quickly rose and fell, and she stared at him, her lips apart.

"Here's Kate, the girl you're always praisin'!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, firmly catching him by the shoulders and thrusting him forward. "Now tell her to her face all the nice things you say behind her back!"

"Mother!" protested Jack reproachfully.

"I think I'll be off now, Mrs. Gallaher," said Kate. "I won't interfare with Jack's fishin'."

"Arra, stay a momint an' say a word to him," suggested Mrs. Gallaher. "I'll run upsthairs an' lave you young people alone. An' tell your mother, Katie darlin', I'll be over as soon as ivir I can."

She instantly darted away, and Jack Gallaher, moving a step outwards from the doorway—Kate stepping aside to let him pass—looked gloomily up at the sky.

"There won't be much sport to-day, I think," said he.

"You're very fond of fishin', aren't you, Jack?" observed Kate.

He looked hard at his rod and tightened up the pieces.

"I like it well enough," he answered. "But there's not much to be caught in the Carrig."

He tightened up his rod. Kate began to suck her forefinger.

"What's wrong with your finger?" he asked.

"A bit of a thorn," she replied. "It hurts bad enough."

As she presented her finger for observation he took it and examined it resignedly.

" Have you got a pin about you ? " he asked.

He placed the rod against the wall, and Kate, having given him a pin from her blouse, he began a search for the thorn, glancing at her with more impatience than sympathy when she uttered several little screams.

" There ! " said he, letting her hand drop. " I think it's all right now."

" Oh, thanks," said she, putting her finger to her lips again, and adding softly, " It's very kind of you, Jack, to take so much thrubble."

" I'm not kind at all," returned Jack. " But I must be off now. I think I hear mother comin' down the stairs. Good-bye."

With that he caught up the rod, put his head in at the doorway to shout : " I'm goin' now, mother ! " and, raising his cap to Kate, hastened down the street. Kate's eyes seemed moist as she looked after him ; and Mrs. Gallaher, who had been watching the young couple from the stairs, hurried down and, catching Kate by the arm, playfully rushed her back to the Inn, to help Mrs. Mulligan to her hot bath.

After the work of the day Mr. Pepper had retired to his room to write his letters. On the previous day the men with the new plate-glass window had arrived and completed their task towards noon ; and now that the window was in, it was carefully guarded by two constables. The Inn was comparatively quiet, and Mr. Pepper was finishing a long letter to his firm, when his attention was disturbed by noises from the direction of the attic. Presently there were cries of " Pitch her out of the winda ! " the sound of a scuffle, followed by the

swish of a stick and a heavy fall. It was impossible for Mr. Pepper to disregard this disturbance, which was clearly connected with Mrs. Mulligan. Throwing down his pen, he started upstairs, and found a group of persons in the lumber room. Mrs. Mulligan herself, pallid and stern, was seated on the ladder, her tangled grey hair dangling over her eyes. Mary Ann, assisted by a couple of women, was rising from the floor; Mrs. Gallaher was screaming "Sind for the polis!" Mrs. Munro was panting in a corner, and her husband, with fatuous smile, stood irresolutely in the doorway.

"What's the matter here?" asked Mr. Pepper, looking around as he entered.

Mrs. Gallaher instantly turned on him.

"The dirty ould wretch," she exclaimed, "that you've brought into this dacint house won't be washed, and all the thrubble that was gone through for the likes of her!"

Mr. Pepper at once became conscious of a large tub in the middle of the floor, half full of steaming water; beside it a scrubbing brush and a large lump of yellow soap in a broken saucer.

"They'll nivir do it!" said Mrs. Mulligan defiantly from her place on the ladder. "I may be all she says an' worse, but into that tub I'll nivir get while God gives me strength to defind myself."

Rubbing his hands, one over the other, Mr. Munro now edged towards Mr. Pepper and put his smiling face on one side.

"I think, sir," he suggested, "it might be advisable to sind for the Slogger. He's the only person could foorce her into it."

"I am surprised at you!" returned Mr. Pepper,

looking at him with indignation. "I am really surprised at you, Mr. Munro. A man of your years and the father of a family! I did not expect such a statement from you."

Bending his head lower, Mr. Munro rubbed his hands still closer to his breast.

"I only mane it for the best, sir," said he, apologetically.

"I cannot accept such a suggestion at all," said Mr. Pepper reprovingly. "I am sorry you made it, and I hope, on reflection, you will think better of it. I certainly think it is most repugnant, that any man should attempt to force even an old woman like this into a bath against her will."

"Oh, very well, sir," observed Mr. Munro, humbly backing. "It was only an iday. No offinse!"

"It would be outrageous!" said Mr. Pepper. "I would not countenance such a proceeding. Now, look here, Mrs. Mulligan!"

Tightly grasping her stick, Mrs. Mulligan had been keeping a wary watch on the restless movements of Mrs. Gallaher. When Mr. Pepper spoke, however, she turned respectfully towards him.

"I'm lis'enin', sir," said she.

He had advanced a couple of paces towards her stronghold.

"The fact is, Mrs. Mulligan," he explained, "it is absolutely necessary for you to get a thorough washing. I am sorry for it, and regret the necessity as much as you do; but there is no way out of it. And better clothes, too." Here he turned to Mrs. Munro. "Did you get the clothes, Mrs. Munro?"

Mrs. Munro began to steady herself on the

rickety bed where she was seated; but before she could get breath enough to answer, Mrs. Gallaher, pointing to a chair burdened with new clothes and underclothing, exclaimed:

"There they are and far too good for the likes of her!"

"Very good," said Mr. Pepper nodding, after a glance at the chair. "So far so good. You see where the clothes are, Mrs. Mulligan?"

"Yis, sir, I see," she replied.

"Now I want to know," he asked resolutely, "will you take a bath and put on these clothes?"

There was a long pause, and Mrs. Mulligan, working her lips together, seemed to be undergoing a profound mental crisis.

"Is it your wish that I do so, sir?" she inquired at length.

"It is," he replied decisively.

Mrs. Mulligan instantly rose, and all but Mr. Pepper hastily backed.

"Thin," said she, heaving a deep sigh, "I'll do it, in the name of God!"

"And I think you people," said Mr. Pepper to the others, "would be better engaged looking after your own affairs."

He went out and the rest followed, leaving Mrs. Mulligan to herself.

With her high-pitched voice in full action, Mrs. Gallaher descended with Mrs. Munro to the coffee-room, Mr. Munro hastening to the bar to assist Kate in attending to some clamorous customers. When Mrs. Munro seated herself, and clasped her knees in her fat hands, she gazed steadfastly at the new window and drew in a long breath.

"There it is," said she, "an' it's the only consilation I have."

"And you want it all, God love you!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, sitting close to her friend. "It's a beautiful winda an' rale, fine glass; betther, if anything, than the one she broke. But there's a cloud on your heart an' it's me that knows it!"

Her companion stretched out her left hand. Mrs. Gallaher, grasping it, held it affectionately between her own palms.

"It's a good frind y'are to me," observed Mrs. Munro plaintively, "in the hour of my thrubble."

"Don't say thim words to me, ma'am," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, almost hysterically. "They're not fit for me, for I'm only a wake woman, with a heart to fale an' bleed for thim that has the sorra an' the shame over thim, that's brought on you. Don't say a word of praise to me, darlin', for sure the heart of a stone ud bleed for you this weary day!"

"It's not for myself alone I'm thinkin'," said Mrs. Munro, with heavy sadness, "but of Johnnie. I've no right or call to bring the shame home to Johnnie. He's bin a good husbind to me, no matther what his faults may be or no matther whether he's liked or whether he's disliked."

"An' who cud dislike him?" returned Mrs. Gallaher ardently, "ixcept thim that's not worthy to black his boots? Isn't he as honist as the settin' sun an' worships the ground you walk on, as who wouldn't? An' it's the good heart in you that fales for him, though he's a man an' kin bear things that's not fit for the wake shoulders of a poor woman."

"Still an' all, it's him I'm thinkin' about," said Mrs. Munro, with melancholy insistence. "He's done nothin' wrong to me that I should bring the shame upon him."

Mrs. Gallaher sympathetically squeezed the large soft hand.

"It's not your doin'," said she. "God alone knows why He has given you Mrs. Mulligan for an aunt. It's little you desarve the disgrace of her. But——"

An inexplicable noise from the region of the attic cut Mrs. Gallaher's words short. Both women looked at one another with startled faces. There followed a shriek of harsh laughter from the unmistakable throat of Mrs. Mulligan, succeeded by a furious tirade of curses from the same source. Mrs. Munro gripped her friend by the arm.

"Glory be to God!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, rising swiftly. "What is she up to now? She'll set fire to the place. Excuse me, ma'am. I'll run up like a flash an' see what divilmint's on foot."

In a second she was gone, leaving Mrs. Munro sitting aghast, staring at the new window, her ears strained for the next sound. Joining the excited group from the bar, Mrs. Gallaher quickly outdistanced them in the flight upstairs, and, tearing open the door of Mrs. Mulligan's room, uttered a yell which hastened everyone to her side. Instead of taking a bath, Mrs. Mulligan, in a sudden frenzy, had upset the tub, and retreated to the attic, inside where she could be heard, fervently devoting everybody to perdition.

"Look!" screamed Mrs. Gallaher, pointing to

the streaming floor as the people crowded in on her. "Look at what she's done! Out of this dacint house she must go this very instant. The ould reprobate! The ould villain! Is there no man willin' an' able to rid a rispictable family of this ould divil?"

Half a dozen men instantly offered to break their way into the attic and pitch its occupant into the street, and they were about to rush for the ladder when Mr. Pepper suddenly arrived.

"Hold on there!" he shouted. "You can't do that without Mr. Munro's permission. Where's Mr. Munro?"

Mr. Munro advanced, smiling humbly, from the background.

"You see these men!" exclaimed Mr. Pepper, seizing the innkeeper by the shoulder and pointing at the group of undecided men. "Tell them to clear right out of this!"

"He'll do nothin' of the sort!" cried Mrs. Gallaher furiously, facing both Mr. Pepper and the hesitating innkeeper. "You've brought disgrace enough on this house, you an' your ould thramp; an' Misther Munro won't lower himself any more for the sake of your dirty money!"

With bent head, though still smiling and rubbing one hand over another, Mr. Munro looked irresolutely from the angry woman to the anxious face of Mr. Pepper.

"She's made herself too much of a nuisance, sir," said he, referring to Mrs. Mulligan. "I'm raley very sorry, but I fear she must be evicted."

The men, who were standing ready on the wet

floor, gave a cheer of approval, and one actually mounted the step ladder.

" Stop ! " cried Mr. Pepper eagerly ; then turning to Mr. Munro, he took him by the lappet of the coat. " See here, Mr. Munro," said he, " before any decision is arrived at, I must ask you to give me five minutes' conversation. After that, you can do as you please."

" He will not ! " exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher officiously. " You'll only blarney him over——"

" You, too," said Mr. Pepper to her, " I should be glad of your company, too, as you seem a person of importance here. I only ask five minutes."

Somewhat mollified by this deference to her authoritative attitude, Mrs. Gallaher nodded acquiescence to Mr. Munro, who inflated his chest with an air of relief.

" Your request, sir," said he, " is raisinable. Let's go downstairs."

" Meanwhile," observed Mr. Pepper, " I ask that the old woman be left alone."

" Gintlemin," said Mr. Munro, appealing to the group, " I'm greatly obliged to you for your naybourly assistance. But will you now kindly step down to the bar for five minutes ? "

The men disappointedly filed out, whilst the others, who were presently joined by Mrs. Munro, went to a private room. Here Mr. Pepper, who looked troubled, walked to the window and stared blindly out at the thoroughfare where the dusk was rapidly closing in. Seated in the first available chair, Mrs. Munro panted beside her husband, whose eyes were bent on the figure of the man at the window. Of the four, Mrs. Gallaher, her lips

pursed and head held stiffly in the air, alone seemed to know her own mind. It was with a slight sigh that Mr. Pepper, after a few moments silent contemplation of the chimney-pots on the opposite side of the square, turned slowly round. He was about to speak, but paused to cross the room and close the door which was slightly open. Then, walking to the fireplace, he faced the others, putting his hands in his pockets.

"Mr. Munro," said he, "you have been very patient, and so has Mrs. Munro, under very trying circumstances; and I really must, in the first place, apologize for all the trouble I have put you to."

"So well you may!" observed Mrs. Gallaher sharply. "You raley ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

He raised his eyebrows slightly at her.

"I can't say," he returned, "that I have anything to be ashamed of. That is rather a strong way of putting it. But, to come at once to the business in hand. The fact is, it is absolutely necessary that Mrs. Mulligan should remain here for a few days more——"

Mrs. Gallaher interrupted him by rising and breathing hard with indignation for a moment.

"That's enough now," said she. "You've done enough mischief already. I'm surprised at you, I am indade, whin you see the disthress an' misery you've brought on her that has a heart the laste thrubble kin melt! If I've anything to say in the matter, the ould reprobate won't be here another hour. Am I right, ma'am?"

"I sartinly don't want her here," replied Mrs. Munro, in answer to this appeal, shaking her head

sadly; "not alone for my own sake, or the sake of the reputation of the place, but for the black shadda she casts on Johnnie who has nivir done me any harm."

Uneasily shuffling his feet, Mr. Munro looked at Mr. Pepper from the tops of his blinking eyes.

"I think, sir," he ventured to observe, "all things considhered, sir, the ould woman had betther go."

"Supposing," suggested Mr. Pepper, "I pay double for her?"

"Not if you paid thribble for her!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, sitting down stiffly and folding her arms tightly across her spare bosom. "What did I tell you, Misther Munro? Didn't I say, he'd blarney you into it? Don't listen to him. He's not as innicint as he looks."

Mr. Pepper knitted his brows closer and shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps," said he, "I ought to take your remark as a compliment. But, I assure you, I understand the unpleasantness of the matter quite clearly. But, now, kindly listen to me." Moving a step towards them, his voice fell to a lower and more solemn pitch. "I want you to promise that any information I may give you now is strictly private."

There was so much earnestness in his tone and manner, that a deep, expectant silence fell upon them; even upon Mrs. Gallaher, who opened her mouth and eyes wider in anticipation.

"I take it that you promise?" he continued, looking from one to the other. "It is really a very important matter and concerns you, Mrs. Munro, and your husband very closely."

"Well, sir, of coorse," observed Mr. Munro, "anything you say we'll considher in the nature of a saycrit. My wife, I'm sure, won't mention it to a sowl."

"Indade I won't, Johnnie," assented Mrs. Munro, looking up trustfully at him.

Mr. Pepper turned to Mrs. Gallaher.

"And you, Mrs.——?" he asked. "I really forget your name, but as you appear to have some interest or considerable influence here——"

"My name's Gallaher," she interrupted sharply.

"Well, Mrs. Gallaher, I may rely upon you not to repeat what you hear from me?"

"My word's good enough," replied Mrs. Gallaher. "Anything you say consarnin' Mrs. Munro's saycrid to me."

"Very good," returned Mr. Pepper.

Drawing a chair near, he leaned an arm on the table, and they drew in a little closer around him.

"The facts," said he, "are these: I represent a firm of solicitors in London, who are in this matter acting as agents. I came over here to discover Mrs. Mulligan. I have discovered her."

"I thought so!" ejaculated Mrs. Gallaher triumphantly. "She's committed a murdher!"

Rising hastily, Mr. Pepper raised his hand with a warning "H'sh!" Then, after a glance towards the closed door, resumed his seat.

"Nothing of the kind," said he. "A relative of hers who has died in the United States has left her, in his will—a will scrawled by a dying man on a half-sheet of notepaper, but still valid—he has left her a fortune of over three million dollars."

Never before had Mrs. Gallaher or the Munros

been stricken with such an amazed silence as fell upon them now. Not a sound was heard in the room save Mr. Pepper's movement as he sat back in his chair. The voices from the bar came to them in a muffled hum, and a cart rattled away towards the far end of the main street. But in the room persisted a profound silence.

Presently Mr. Pepper rose, pushed back his chair, and took up his former position before the fireplace.

"You will understand, therefore," he added at length, "the necessity of keeping Mrs. Mulligan under close observation."

None of the others seemed to hear this remark. Mrs. Gallaher was heard to murmur: "Three million dollars!" and Mr. Munro repeated the words in his throat with a voice like a rusty file.

"But, sir," gasped Mrs. Munro at last, "is it raily thrue?"

"It is so true," replied Mr. Pepper, "that I have been sent here with orders to spare no expense to find her and bring her to London. She will, in all probability, have to go to the States. That is why I am so anxious that she should get into some sort of civilized trim. She can't travel as she is. She must be polished up a bit."

Again no one seemed inclined to respond to these remarks; but the words "Three million dollars!" wandered from Mrs. Gallaher's whitened lips to Mr. Munro's tightened throat.

"Do you think," asked Mr. Pepper, as he shook his coat and prepared to leave, "that I am staying in this town of yours for pleasure? If I consulted my own wishes, I would not spend half an hour in

it. No! I am here strictly on business, most important business you will admit."

"So important, sir," said Mr. Munro, finding voice at length, "that you may considher this Inn as your own. Your ordhers here, sir, in future will be law."

"I require no concessions," returned Mr. Pepper, coldly. "I simply ask for quietness and order, so that I may get through my business in peace. For the present, however, I think we may separate. I must, before leaving, again impress on you all the necessity of absolute secrecy. Otherwise, there will be a lot of public excitement and unnecessary trouble."

"I quite understand that, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Munro, starting up to open the door for his wonderful guest. "You may rely on us, sir. We'll be as saycrit as the grave. An' as for the Inn, sir, it will be as quiet as a churchyard."

Then when Mr. Pepper, nodding coldly, passed out, Mr. Munro closed the door, put his back to it, and, looking with starting eyes at the women, exclaimed hoarsely:

"Three million dollars!"

CHAPTER VI.

MRS. GALLAHER'S BEHAVIOUR.

THE shop had been closed an hour ago. In the back parlour Mr. Gallaher and Jack had been sitting, awaiting the tea which Mrs. Gallaher always prepared. Mr. Gallaher had smoked two pipes and read the *Flashlight* through—including the market reports—and Jack had finished half a dozen cigarettes, while he polished the brass rings on his fishing-rod.

"She's very late to-night," observed Mr. Gallaher laying down the paper and taking off his glasses.

"Ay," responded Jack. "She's still over with them Munros."

"She's tarin' mad," remarked his father, slowly rubbing his glasses with a large handkerchief, "an' no mistake, about Miss Kate."

"She may get sane again," said Jack sternly. "I've made up my mind, an' if she says much more, I'll lave the house for good an' all!"

Breathing on the glasses, Mr. Gallaher held them up to the light before giving them another soft scrubbing.

"That 'ud be a tirrible business," said he,

" breakin' up a house like that ; though, of coorse you'll make a home of your own some day. Mathrimony's a very sarious thing, and it doesn't always turn out the way you expect."

" Oh, you're goin' to prache now," said Jack offendedly.

" No, no, son," said Mr. Gallaher hastily. " I'm not. I say youth must have its fling, an' you can't put an ould head on young shoulders. Perhaps it's just as well. Whisht ! There's your mother come at last ! I'm not sorry, for I'm dead bate for a cup of tay ! "

Mrs. Gallaher had come in—the front door being ajar—without much noise. But, in the hall way, she laughed in such a strange way, that father and son started to their feet and looked at one another in awed perplexity.

" What's the matter, I wondher ? " murmured Mr. Gallaher.

Next moment Mrs. Gallaher stood in the parlour doorway. She stared at them with strange, glittering eyes.

" Is your son John Pathrick Gallaher there ? " she asked of her husband.

" Jack's here right enough," answered Mr. Gallaher gently, but more alarmed than ever.

" Let him ordher his carriage now," said she with a short, quick laugh, " or his murdher car if he likes it betther. If he's not a fool, if he's not a fool, if he's not a fool ! "

Uttering these words with startling rapidity, she suddenly rushed towards Jack, who shrank back, instinctively raising his arm.

" *Are* you a fool ? " she asked, thrusting her

face, now glaring red, close to his; "are you a fool like your father? Is Kate Munro not good enough for you? Will you kill me with your folly? Will you kill your mother, will you?"

"No, mother, I don't want to kill you!" protested Jack, tears starting to his eyes. "Father, what——"

Mr. Gallaher raised a trembling hand.

"Whisht, son!" said he.

Clasping her hands tightly together, Mrs. Gallaher struck them against her brows.

"No, no, no!" she cried. "The mother that sthrived for you, fought for you, humbled herself for you, you won't kill her? You'll dhrive about in your carriage wud sarvints before an' behind. That's my own Jack, my good Jack, my boy!"

Bursting into tears she raced from the room, up to her bedroom; and they heard her presently laughing and sobbing there. Neither father or son spoke for some time, but they stared aghast at each other with faces deathly pale; and held their breath.

"Father!" gasped Jack at length, "what's the matter with her?"

Mr. Gallaher, who had weakly sat down, now solemnly rose.

"Jack, my boy," said he, "she's taken this Kate Munro business tirribly to heart. We won't get any tay to-night unless we make it ourselves."

"Who wants tay?" said Jack, indignantly. "An' mother in that state! Lis'en!"

Opening her door, Mrs. Gallaher screamed down to them:

"Not a word more agin Mrs. Mulligan! Kape your mouths shut!"

With that she slammed her door and they heard her crying and laughing afresh.

"I'd betther go for the docthor," suggested Jack in a horrified voice.

"There's something happined over there," observed Mr. Gallaher with profound gravity, "in the 'Horse an' Car.' It's not dhrink, for your mother's a taytotaller. They've turned her poor brain someway or another. An' before we sind for the docthor, I'll go over an' see what they've bin sayin' or doin' to her."

"Don't be long," suggested Jack, alarmed at the prospect of being alone in the house with his mother.

"I won't, Jack," responded his father gently. "I know how you fale, my son. I won't be more'n five minutes, or maybe six. But I must probe this matter to the bitther ind."

He went out, crossing over the peaceful thoroughfare under the brightening starlight, and resolutely entered the coffee-room of the Inn, Jack watching him with deep anxiety from their own doorway.

When Mr. Gallaher, with set, resolute face, entered the coffee-room—which was lit by two paraffin lamps either end of the chimneypiece—he found Mr. Munro there alone; and Mr. Munro was walking about as in a frenzy, throwing his arms about, snapping his fingers, and pausing at intervals to do a little step dance before the new plate-glass window. Mr. Gallaher had barely time to be thunderstruck at this unexpected behaviour when

Mr. Munro, suddenly discovering him, rushed at him and seized him by both arms.

"Naine your dhrink, sir!" exclaimed the Innkeeper. "What's it to be? Hullo there! Anyone at the bar? Hullo there! Dhrink here galore for Misther Gallaher!"

"Ixcuse me, Misther Munro," observed Mr. Gallaher firmly, "but if you don't mind I won't take any dhrink at prisint. Jack's waitin' for me across the way an' I just dhropped in to know what you've bin sayin' or doin' to Mrs. Gallaher, for she's come home quite sthrange an' quare."

At this statement Mr. Munro burst into a peal of loud laughter, danced his step-dance, sung a snatch of a song, then sat down and laughed anew.

"Name your dhrink, neighbour!" he explained, jumping up again. "There's no resarve price now. Whisky? Champagne? Hullo there! Hullo there! Anyone in the bar? Divil a sowl. They're all gone mad. What's your opinion, sir, about Mexican Rails?"

"About what?" asked Mr. Gallaher, with a profoundly puzzled face.

Taking him by the arm and becoming suddenly serious, Mr. Munro walked him slowly up and down the room.

"I am thinkin', sir," said he, "very considherably about Mexican Rails. They've a tindency to go up, I think, haven't they?"

"Sorra know I know," returned Mr. Gallaher. "If they have, it's a bad lookout for the thrains, I'd say."

"No, no, sir," said Mr. Munro, giving his arm a friendly little shake; "this is a sayrious matther.

The infloonce of Mexican Rails on the Stock markit, sir, is attractin' the notice of sayrious capatilists."

"Bedad," said Mr. Gallaher, as if suddenly enlightened. "I think the infloonce of that ould reprobate Mrs. Mulligan on you an' ivrybody——"

"How dar you, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Munro letting him go and looking him indignantly up and down. "How dar you spake of my distinguished relative in thim vulgar tarms? Lave my hotel, sir, at wanst!"

"Why?" gasped Mr. Gallaher, stepping back. "What have I said?"

"What have you said, sir? You have insulted a lady, sir! That is enough." cried Mr. Munro, pointing excitedly to the door. "The friendship with which I honoured you is at an ind!"

Giving a low whistle, Mr. Gallaher put his hands into his pockets, and, without a word, stepped into the hall. He was proceeding to the door when he heard the rustle of a dress, and turning, saw Mrs. Munro panting down the stairs.

"Are you goin', Misther Gallaher?" she asked, surprised.

Before Mr. Gallaher could reply, Mr. Munro, himself, appeared at the coffee-room doorway with folded arms.

"Yis, darlin'," said he to his wife. "He has dar'd to call Mrs. Mulligan—our rispictable an' ven'rable relative—a reprobate!"

Mrs. Munro instantly drew up her fat figure to its highest and gazed indignantly at Mr. Gallaher.

"Oh, indade?" said she. "Well, thim tarms are not the tarms I allow anyone, even Misther Gallaher,

to use to my dear aunt. I'm surprised at you Misther Gallaher ! "

" By my sowl," said Mr. Gallaher, breathless with amazement, " you're not more surprised than I am, ma'am ! "

Without waiting for any more words, he rushed across to the stores where Jack still anxiously stood awaiting him.

" Jack ! " said he, as he met him ; " Jack ! "

" Father ! " exclaimed Jack with unknown terror, " what's wrong ? "

" Put somethin' cowld to my head ! " murmured Mr. Gallaher with his hand to his forehead. " Somethin' cowld like a tombstone. There's somethin' inside my skull goin' round an' round like a lot of wheels."

As he was rushing past, Jack seized him convulsively by the arm.

" Father ! " he exclaimed ; " you're not goin' quare like mother, are you ? "

" I dunno how I'm goin'," moaned Mr. Gallaher, staggering down the hall to the parlour. " Come in, Jack, an' shut the doore an' let me get a grip of my pipe, for, if I don't get a heavy smoke quick an' soon, I'm a dead man ! "

With trembling hands Jack closed the door ; then followed his father into the parlour.

" Wha—what's happined ? " he asked, resting a hand on the top of the chair in which his father had sat down.

Mr. Gallaher wiped his brows with his sleeve.

" I dunno," he answered. " There's somethin' goin' on over there that bates me intirely. I can't make head or tail of it."

"But what is it? What did you see?" asked Jack impatiently.

Crossing to the window, he put his back to the sill and folded his arms.

"I saw Johnnie Munro dancin' an' leppin' like a leprachaun," replied Mr. Gallaher, staring heavily at the empty fire-grate. "First, he wants to give me whisky an' champagne. Then he ordhers me out of the house. Is your mother gone to bed?" he asked abruptly.

Jack started, looking up at the ceiling and listened.

"I don't know," he answered.

His father rose.

"I'll creep up an' see," said he. "Maybe, if she's gone to bed she'll slape it off."

Straightening himself, Jack tried to look as if he was not nervous.

"I'll go up with you," said he, closely following his father.

They crept out of the room and up the stairs on tiptoe. At the bedroom landing Mr. Gallaher paused; raised a warning hand, then placed his eye to the keyhole of his wife's closed door. In the intense desire to be deeply silent, Jack gave a smothered cough, and instantly the door was flung open and Mrs. Gallaher appeared, fully dressed.

"Say nothin' agin Mrs. Mulligan!" she exclaimed. "And ordher the carriage for John Pathrick Gallaher!"

Having uttered these commands, she disappeared within and slammed the door. Her appearance had been so unexpected, that Mr. Gallaher stumbled back down the first step of the stairs, colliding

with Jack, who staggered to the bottom. In another moment they were back again in the parlour, staring at one another.

"I'd better go for the docthor," said Jack, with an air of resolution.

He began to button up his coat. But his father laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Wait till mornin'," he suggested. "Your mother'll be all right afther a slape, an' if we sint in a docthor to her now I wouldn't be risponsible for his life. But, I have it, Jack! I have it!"

"What have you got, sir?" exclaimed Jack, startled anew. "Don't go on like that!"

"I have it!" said Mr. Gallaher exultingly, snapping his fingers; "She's dead!"

"Who? Who's dead?" cried Jack, gripping his father's arm. "Not mother?"

"The ould woman," explained his father. "Ould Mrs. Mulligan. She died sudden," he added confidently. "An' that's what's upset thim all!"

Jack seemed at once surprised and impressed by this theory.

"Maybe you're right," said he; adding: "But then, in that case, the 'Horse an' Car' ought to be shut up an' all the blinds down. I'll just go to the doore an' see."

"Ay, ay; let's go!" said Mr. Gallaher.

Together they went down the hallway. Jack opened the front door. The open space was now brightly illumined by the moonlight. All the front windows of the "Horse and Car" were alight; and, on the top of the steps, stood a man smiling radiantly at the moon.

"Why, it's ould Mexican Rails!" exclaimed

Mr. Gallaher. "He can't contain himself with ji now the ould woman's dead an' gone, an' a good riddance too!"

"Who are you talkin' about?" cried a voice behind them. "Who's dead an' gone?"

They turned swiftly and saw Mrs. Gallaher on the last step of the staircase, the lamplight from the back parlour streaming through the open doorway and making her look deathlike. Instinctively, Jack and his father crossed themselves.

"Who's dead an' gone?" repeated Mrs. Gallaher, making towards them.

"Ould Mrs. Mulligan," replied Mr. Gallaher stepping hastily aside.

"God forbid!" cried Mrs. Gallaher. "No, no! She's alive an' well, plaise God. Ah, there's Misther Munro. I'll run over an' see."

Passing between her husband and son, she raced across to the Inn and up the steps. They watched her with Mr. Munro disappear. Then Mr. Gallaher turned inward with a sigh.

"We'd betther go in, Jack," said he. "This bates me altogether. But, with the help of God, as I've had no tay, I'll take a smoke an' go to bed!"

CHAPTER VII.

MR. CASEY'S EDITORIAL.

A WEEK passed.

It was about two o'clock in the day. The beam of sunlight spreading across the open thoroughfare shot through the window and concentrated itself on the bent form of Mr. Gallaher as he stooped over a basket of boots to untie a string. He was startled by a strong voice, and, rising, faced Mr. Casey, who, outside the counter, flourished the latest edition of the *Flashlight*.

"I think I have him this time!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, exultingly. "Did you rade my latest editorial?"

"Well, then," observed Mr. Gallaher, amicably approaching and resting his broad hands on the counter, "to tell the truth, Misther Casey, I haven't seen it yet. But, sure, it's a thrate I always resarve for the evenin'."

"Lis'en to this," said Mr. Casey, with a flourish of his arm as he turned his back to the door to get the full light on the paper; and he began to read:

"We understand that the 'Horse and Car' has

got a new coat of whitewash. It would take a lot to whitewash Johnnie Munro. Where is this blatant guttersnipe getting the money? We shall soon see his one-eyed bully, The Slogger, in livery. Has the English gentleman, Mr. Pepper—for whose person and hospitality We have the greatest respect —been so foolish as to lend the swindler, Munro, a ten-pound note? If so, We feel safe in predicting that he will never see as much as sixpence of it again."

He read on to the end, pausing at each point to look sideways at Mr. Gallaher, who uttered exclamations of rapture and approval.

"What d'you think of it?" asked Mr. Casey, when he had finished and laid the paper on the counter. "Mind! I want your candid opinion. whither you think it sthrong or wake. Because, I'd rather have a straight, honist opinion from a man like you than a lot of blarney."

With his arms folded on the counter, Mr. Gallaher gazed thoughtfully down at the sheet before him; then up at the expectant face of Mr. Casey, who had thrust his hat far back on his head and stood with outspread legs, smilingly awaiting criticism.

"Well," observed Mr. Gallaher slowly, "I nivir liked the man. I've known him now for many a year an' I know as much of him now as I did whin I first met him. He's not straight an' he's not the kind of man you could ivir get frindly with."

"Ay, but what do you think of the editorial now?" asked Mr. Casey, with slight impatience.

"Bedad," answered Mr. Gallaher, with profound

admiration, " it bates me where you git all the grand words an' idays. To a man like me, it's most wondherful to find ivry number of the *Flashlight* full of grand fresh idays an' language that takes the breath away."

" You think I kin write a bit, then ? " suggested Mr. Casey, with a weak air of modesty.

Solemnly shaking his head up and down, Mr. Gallaher spread his hand on the *Flashlight*.

" There's more in that paper," said he, " than any other paper I ivir read. An' I say now to your face, Misther Casey, what I've of'en said behind your back—without wantin' to flatther you ayther —that it's a pity to see a man of your brain power wastin' his time in a little town like Carrigmore. That's the way I look at it."

" Well, maybe I won't be much longer here," said Mr. Casey, with a significant wink.

" Well, God be praised, I hope you won't ! " said Mr. Gallaher fervently ; adding hastily, as Mr. Casey, looked puzzled, " I mane, for your own sake. Personilly, I'd be rale sorry to lose you. I'd nivir get a paper like that agin. I nivir care to rade any other ; for they same poor stuff beside the *Flashlight*. But, with the help of God, you'll be with us many a long year, I hope."

" But don't you think I might do betther in a wider spear ? " suggested Mr. Casey. " One can't shine much in Carrigmore."

" The widher the spear the more you'll shine," observed Mr. Gallaher, admiringly. " You're lost here, and that's a fact."

He might have said more in the same strain, but he caught sight of his wife hurrying across from the

Inn, and he abruptly turned to stoop again over the boots. Mr. Casey snatched up his paper as Mrs. Gallaher entered.

"Did you rade my latest editorial ma'am?" he asked, preparing to unfold the paper.

"Indade, I didn't," responded Mrs. Gallaher, who seemed flushed and anxious. "Is Jack in?" she asked her husband.

"He is, in troth," he answered. "He's in the room beyant," with a jerk of his thumb towards the back parlour.

Making no rejoinder, Mrs. Gallaher pushed past the offended editor, entered the parlour and closed the door with a quick bang.

"What I want to know is," she said excitedly to her son, "whether you mane to go over an' talk to Kate Munro, as you promised me, or whether you want to break your mother's heart?"

With his elbows on the window sill and his fingers in his hair, Jack Gallaher had been wistfully gazing out at the fowl in the backyard. He had heard his mother enter, and he listened to her, but did not reply or turn round.

"Do you hear me spakin' to you?" she asked, approaching nearer.

Then Jack Gallaher turned about, and his mother, at sight of his miserable face, wrung her hands.

"I've given you a promise," said he. "I'll go over an' see her. But I know the result. I rispict her, but I can't care about her."

"I gev a saycrid promise some nights ago," said Mrs. Gallaher, in tones of such intense mystery, that Jack stared wonderingly at her, "a saycrid

promise nivir to say a word to mortal soul about what was told me. Three of us only know it: Mrs. Munro, Misther Munro, an' myself. Jack, my darlin' boy, lis'en to me. You are my own flesh an' blood, an' I can't bring any sin on my soul by tellin' you. But you mustn't repate it to man, woman, or child."

"Of coorse not, mother," assented Jack, staring at her harder than ever.

She glanced back at the closed door; then, coming softly close to him, put a hand on his shoulder.

"Jack, darlin'," said she in a trembling voice, "your poor ould mother——"

"You're not ould, mother," he interrupted.

"I am, an' I feel ould," said she. "But before I die I want to see my only child settled for life. There's nothin' to be gained out of the Stores, Jack, as you know, but bare bread an' butther. And, then, I said to myself, 'If Jack married Kate Munro, the "Horse and Car" will be his!' It's for you, Jack, I'm thinkin'; always for you, my own darlin' boy!"

She gently stroked his cheek and Jack hung his head.

"I know that, mother," he murmured.

"An' I know," continued his mother quickly, "there's nothin' bad about Katie. She's a rale good girl, she has a good timper an' she'd make a good wife to any man that ud thrate her dacint. She may not be as purty as other girls, but, Jack, that wears off as you get oulder."

"I know all that, mother," said Jack impatiently. "But what about this wondherful saycrit?"

Again Mrs. Gallaher glanced back at the door;

again she came closer to Jack, putting both hands on his shoulders, and then she bent down and whispered in his ear :

" Jack, Kate Munro will be a millionaire ! "

For some moments Jack could not speak. The announcement started his mind into a whirlpool of fancies. He remained staring speechlessly up into his mother's vivid eyes.

" Kate Munro, Jack," she repeated, " will be a millionaire."

" Mother," said Jack faintly, " what sort o' talk is this ? "

" It is God's truth," she replied. " Lis'en, Jack. D'you know why the Englishman came to Carrigmore ? "

" To see the place," replied Jack, though he knew now that his answer was not sufficient.

" No, Jack," returned his mother excitedly. " He came to find Mrs. Mulligan, because some relation of hers in America has died an' left her five millions of dollars. That's the saycrit, Jack. Let your poor mother kiss her boy ! " Catching his face between her hands, she kissed him. " That's the saycrit, Jack," she repeated exultingly. " An' there's no heir to Mrs. Mulligan but Kate, for she's took to Kate now, an' won't let the girl out of her sight. An' Kate's husbind 'll nivir want bite or sup. He'll have pockets stuffed with goold an' castles an' murdher cars an' his own lakes to fish in ! Oh, Jack, Jack, put your arms round your poor ould mother an' tell her you won't desart her in her lovin' plans ! It may be hard for you, Jack, but think of how much it manes. Think of it, Jack, only think of it ! "

Obediently, but bewildered, Jack put his arms round her and kissed her, and felt the tears run down her cheeks. But she laughed hysterically as she felt his kiss and wiped away the tears with her sleeves.

"I must be goin' back to thim," said she, "because they can't do anything without me. But it's all for you, Jack darlin', that I wear myself out in their sarvice. You'll come across soon an' see Kate?"

"I will, mother," assented Jack, with a deep sigh, "since you ask me to."

"That's my darlin' boy!" exclaimed his mother; and, turning to look back, her hand on the door handle: "Mind, nivir a word to man, woman, or child!"

"Oh, I'll kape it all to myself," returned Jack, nodding confidently. "You may rely on me, mother."

She smiled again at him, then opened the door and went out into the shop.

"Hould on a minute!" shouted Mr. Casey, as she was hastening past him.

Snatching up the *Flashlight*, he flourished it before her, and, barring her way, his legs well apart, prepared to read.

"Lis'en to this," said he. "I won't rade it all to you as you same in a hurry. But your husbind there kin tell you whether it's worth listenin' to or not. What do you say, Mr. Gallaher?"

At first sight of his wife Mr. Gallaher had hurriedly retired from the counter over which he had been amicably chatting with Mr. Casey, and now, in the far corner of the shop, stooped over a kish of

brogues. He professed not to hear the editor's appeal.

"Here, ma'am," said Mr. Casey. "Just one extract. Lis'en.

"'The ancient Bedlamite, Mrs. Mulligan, is still located with her blatant nephew-in-law, Johnnie Munro; and all We can say is, neither is a credit to Carrigmore, whose interests We have closely at heart. Between the twenty-times convicted old female tramp and the tourist-assassinator, Johnnie Munro, there is little to choose.'"

"How dar' you!" cried Mrs. Gallaher, snatching the paper from him and dashing it to the floor. "How dar' you use such vile language about people fifty times betther nor y'are yourself. Here, git out of my way! You're not fit to clane Mrs. Mulligan's boots nor Misther Munro's ayther."

Mr. Casey's face, expectant of appreciation, if not praise, changed in expression and hue as Mrs. Gallagher, catching him by the collar, hustled him before her out of the shop, giving him a parting shake that knocked his hat off. With terrified eyes, Mr. Gallaher watched this onslaught; hastening to the window to note the sequel as his wife headed straight for the "Horse and Car," and Mr. Casey, red to the ears, stooped to pick up his hat.

"I'm rale sorry, Misther Casey," he began apologetically, as the editor came back.

"There's conduct!" shouted Mr. Casey across the counter, brushing his damaged hat with his sleeve. "There's conduct from a woman that I've nivir said

a word aginst ayther in the *Flashlight* or out of it!"

"What woman are you talkin' about?" asked Jack Gallaher's stern voice behind him, adding menacingly, as Mr. Casey turned to face him: "Are you talkin' about my mother?"

"She's just committed a common assault on me!" explained Mr. Casey quickly. "I gev no provocation. Ask your father there, who was witness."

"I suppose you desarved it," said Jack, looking him up and down. "What have to you to say agin her?"

"Here, Mr. Gallaher!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, alarmed at the young man's manner. "Are you goin' to see me assaulted for the second time on your premises?"

"If you dar' to say a word agin my mother," said Jack fiercely, "I'll break ivry bone in your body."

Mr. Casey was about to retire with all speed through the doorway, but Jack, deftly stepping in front of him, seized him by the arm, having the right hand clenched.

"Mr. Gallaher!" cried Mr. Casey, with a desperate side glance at his friend over the counter, "Will you call off this son of yours?"

"Jack! Jack!" exclaimed Mr. Gallaher, rushing to the counter. "Don't do that! Don't do that!"

He was just in time. Jack, with raised hand, was about to strike, but at his father's appeal released his victim.

"Out you go, then!" said he, pointing to the

door. "If you wait another moment I won't be responsible for your life."

It was unnecessary to say more. In another instant Mr. Casey had disappeared.

"Jack! Jack!" observed his father in mild reproof. "What's the use of makin' an inimy of a man with such a pen as that?"

"To the divil with his pen!" returned Jack fiercely. "I'll kill him yet."

With an angry gesture he fixed his cap aright, then, stepping out of the shop, looked eagerly up and down for Mr. Casey, who had, however, safely vanished. Despoiled of his prey, he set his face hard and made across to the "Horse and Car," his father watching him with anxious eyes through the window.

CHAPTER VIII.

RECONCILIATION.

MR. CASEY was about to enter the office of the *Flashlight*. He had been so deep in thought, that he was unaware of having been followed until he heard his name called. Turning, he beheld a heavy, one-eyed man of sinister aspect, who wore livery—a bright green coat with large brass buttons, a red stripe down the trousers, and, on the gold band of the cap, which fitted badly on the round head, were the letters " H and C Hotel." It was some moments before Mr. Casey realized that this extraordinary person was the Slogger. His first impulse to fly for safety was overcome by astonishment at the strangely weak attitude of the ex-pugilist, who held out a card between his big thumb and forefinger.

" What do you want ? " asked Mr. Casey, with an effort at dignity.

The Slogger humbly touched the peak of his gold-laced cap.

" The masther wants to know," said he, " if you'll come up an 'see him."

" Wants to see me ? " said Mr. Casey wonderingly.

Taking the card he read :—" J. MUNRO, ESQUIRE, Proprietor, Horse and Car Hotel, Carrigmore." On the back was scrawled in pencil : " Will Mr. Casey come up for a frindly drink when suitable ? J. M."

Having read this invitation several times, Mr. Casey still remained gazing perplexedly at it, his hat on the back of his head, his left arm under his coat-tails, whilst the Slogger's eye roamed from sky and housetops to the uneven pavement.

" Well," observed Mr. Casey at length, " it's frindly enough. Tell Misther Munro I'll be round in a minute."

Again the Slogger touched his cap, and Mr. Casey, in bewilderment, watched him doing so, and stood staring after his thick, lumbering form as he lurched back to the Inn.

After some cogitation and re-reading of the card which he eventually put in a greasy old pocket-book, Mr. Casey decided to follow, proceeding slowly, with cautious mind. When he rounded the corner of the last jutting house he saw, standing on the steps of the Inn, and apparently awaiting him, Mr. Munro himself, with his unmeaning smile. He wore a velvet jacket with silk facings, well-cut trousers, and snowy linen. Slowly and cautiously Mr. Casey ascended the five steps of the Inn and allowed himself to be taken by the arm.

" Come in, Misther Casey," said Mr. Munro pleasantly. " It's rale glad I am to see you ! It's time you an' me wor frinds. Don't you think so ? "

" That remains to be seen," observed Mr. Casey coldly. " It's rather sudden it seems to me."

" You'll have no cause for compleent," remarked Mr. Munro, with his new English accent as he brought his friend past the newly decorated bar into the freshly furnished parlour. " If we've bin inimies in the past, we'll be all the betther frinds in the future."

" Well, we shall see," remarked Mr. Casey stiffly.

" What's your dhrink, sir ? " asked Mr. Munro.

" Whisky," replied Mr. Casey.

" Hullo, there ! " shouted Mr. Munro through the open doorway towards the bar. " Anyone there ? "

The noise of the loud talkers obscured his voice, which, even as a shout, was thin. He went out himself, speedily returning with a large full decanter and a couple of tumblers. During this brief absence Mr. Casey had time to examine the new fittings and furniture. His attention, however, was soon directed to the decanter and the mysterious manner of his host, who, having deposited his glasses on the centre table, put his finger on his lips and, walking stealthily to the door, closed it. He turned round then, smiled at Mr. Casey, and returned to the table.

" Before I partake of dhrink here, Munro," observed Mr. Casey, who had watched him suspiciously, " I would be glad to know in what spirit I'm invited. Am I to be led into a trap ? Am I to be assaulted by your one-eyed menial ? In short, what is it you want me to do ? "

" First, dhrink ! " said Mr. Munro, recklessly gurgling out a tumblerful. " Then I'll spake plain an' straight, like man to man."

" That's good enough," said Mr. Casey. " But, excuse me, I'm partial to a dhrop of dacint whisky, but I don't want to drink it by the gallon."

Good-humouredly laughing, Mr. Munro poured half of the contents of Mr. Casey's tumbler into his own and pushed a goblet of water towards his guest.

" Won't you sit down ? " he asked, taking a seat himself. " I want to be frinds with you. We're gettin' on in life, you an' me, Misther Casey. We have to live an' die in the same town. Let's be frinds ! "

" I like the way you spake, Munro," said Mr. Casey, who, when he had placed his hat on the table, seated himself and finished his whisky at one effort. " But, you'll admit, afther the henious manner you thrated me, I'm not to be aisily won. I'm not a boy."

" I thrated you bad, I admit it," responded Mr. Munro. " I sued you for a thrifle that I ought to have let go. I'm ashamed of it whin I think of it. More whisky ! It's good stuff. Here's the decanther. Help yourself. Slanthé ! I want to make aminds."

Thrusting a hand into his trousers pocket, he drew it up full of sovereigns and half-sovereigns, with a sprinkling of silver. Pausing in his second help, Mr. Casey, at sight of so much money, stared in undisguised amazement.

" There y'are, Misther Casey," observed Mr. Munro, counting out ten sovereigns which he thrust carelessly across the table. " You'll obleege me by takin' that."

Laying down his tumbler, Mr. Casey looked from the little heap of gold to his companion.

"What's this for?" he asked. "Do you suppose that I am capable of bein' bribed? You may not have a bright opinion of me, but I hope you haven't so low a one as that."

"You're the last man in Carrigmore," remarked Mr. Munro, "that I'd think of offerin' a bribe to, for I know you'd fling it back in my face."

"I'm glad," returned Mr. Casey with dignity, "that you undherstand me better than I thought."

"I undherstand this much," insisted Mr. Munro. "What's there is for the thrubble I gev you over our laygil dispute, an' little enough it is. If it's not enough, say so."

"It's more than enough," said Mr. Casey, quickly gathering up the coins. "An' since you're a betther man than I ever suspected, may I shake hands with you an' let bygones by bygones?"

They shook hands across the decanter.

"Bygones are bygones, thanks be to God!" exclaimed Mr. Munro. "Misther Casey, I'll take it as an insult if you don't help me to finish this decanther an' another at the back of it."

They clinked glasses then, and said, "Slanthé!" before drinking; and Mr. Casey pulled his chair closer to that of his friend.

"Johnnie," said he, "what kin I do for you? Kin I do anything at all for you? Kin I write a laydin' article for you?"

Smiling his vacant smile, Mr. Munro shook his head.

"Nothin' for me, thanks," said he; "only let the ould woman—I mane Mrs. Mulligan—alone.

You've bin undher a misapprehension about her, an' I'm not surprised. Most people were. But their eyes 'll be opened soon! It's, you, Misther Casey, I give the first hint to. If you can't say anything good of her, say nothin' at all. For why? I don't want you to write in a hurry, an' live to regret it. You take me? I'm Johnnie Munro to you—J. Munro, Esquire, to anyone else. There's more behind this than meets the eye. Don't you say anything agin Mrs. Mulligan. That's your text. Kape on my side, and I'll see you through."

"Johnnie, shake hands agin!" exclaimed Mr. Casey. "The world will be glad of this reconciliation. I ask no questions."

As they shook hands again Mr. Munro bent ever nearer to him and winked with solemnity.

"I'll tell you all in good time, Timothy," said he. "But my tongue 's tied now by powers outside me."

"That'll do. I ask no questions," repeated Mr. Casey, stretching for the decanter. "Look out for the next issue of the *Flashlight*. That's all. Hurroo!"

"An' hurroo! agin an' agin!" cried Mr. Munro with great heartiness, jumping up, and cutting a caper round the table. "I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Tim. I'll inthroduce you to Mrs. Mulligan. Or, if you like it better, I'll inthroduce Mrs. Mulligan to you."

"Let her arrive!" exclaimed Mr. Casey. "Let her appear. Let her produce her identity. I'll intherview her for the benefit of posterity."

Mr. Munro threw open the door, letting in a

burst of noisy talk from the bar, and, thrusting out his head, shouted :

" Are you there, Kate ? "

Some of the men at the bar—which was a few paces distant at the end of the passage—turned round to look at the figure of the Innkeeper as he made a step outwards.

" D'you want Miss Munro, sir ? " asked one in a loud voice.

" Ay, then. Where is she, d'you know ? " returned Mr. Munro ; repeating his shout up the staircase : " Are you there, Kate ? "

There were several shouts from friendly young men : " Are you there, Miss Munro ? "

" Kate's upstairs with her gran'-aunt," explained Mr. Munro, stepping back and talking over his shoulder to Mr. Casey, who, with a large cigar in his mouth, smiled from behind the tumblers. " She calls Mrs. Mulligan ' gran'-aunt.' There's method as well as affection in that, Tim."

" All right, Johnnie," assented Mr. Casey, taking the cigar from his lips and expectorating across the room into the fireplace. " Let her call her what she likes, I'll make a note of it for the public."

At length, Mr. Munro, having vainly waited several minutes, went upstairs himself and came back with Kate and Mrs. Mulligan, who helped herself with her oaken stick. There was a movement of surprise at sight of the old woman amongst the men around the bar. She was dressed in black satin with a double row of pearls around her thick throat, and she had the old clay pipe in her mouth.

Motioning to Kate to bring her grand-aunt into

the presence of Mr. Casey, Mr. Munro himself stepped back to the bar and smiled in a benign manner on the group there.

" Is Miss Murphy here, gentlemin ? " he inquired alluding to the new barmaid who had arrived the previous evening.

Miss Murphy at once appeared at the little opening through which the drinks were handed out.

" Miss Murphy," exclaimed the proprietor, " be good enough to sarve dhrinks all round at my ixpense."

This unexpected burst of generosity was instantly greeted with a roar of applause, and the new barmaid was kept incessantly busy obeying orders for the rest of the evening. Then Mr. Munro walked proudly into the smoke room.

" Mrs. Mulligan," he observed, with an extremely genteel bow, " allow me to introduce you to my sincare frind, Misther Casey, editor of the *Carrigmore Flashlight*, and one of the most brilliant janiuses of the day. He's a gintleman whose name and fame is a household word through the length an' breadth of Ireland."

" Well an' excellently put, Johnnie," said Mr. Casey approvingly. " I'm glad to meet you, Mrs. Mulligan, as a frind."

" Sure, an' I'm glad to see you, too, sir," returned Mrs. Mulligan. " I've hard a great dale about you, an' the head full of knowledge that you have."

Seating herself near the fireplace, she bent her chin on her hands, which were doubled on the top of her stick ; Kate, looking, fresh and healthful, in a new blouse, sat down beside her, and presently

Mrs. Munro appeared holding her dear friend Mrs. Gallaher by the hand.

" Is that where y'are, Mrs. Gallaher ? " exclaimed Mr. Munro with hearty geniality.

He was standing on the hearthrug, displaying his velvet coat, smoking a cigar and feeling the seals which dangled from his heavy gold chain.

" An' where should I be but be the side of your good wife ? " said Mrs. Gallaher. " An' where, too," pointing her open hand towards Mrs. Mulligan, " but in the prisince of that kind ould sowl that makes sunshine wheriver she goes ! "

There was no sign in the face or attitude of the old woman to show that she had heard this flattering remark. She continued slowly smoking and brooding on top of her oaken stick.

" I reciprocate thim sintiments," observed Mr. Casey, turning in his chair and bowing with his hand on his chest, towards Mrs. Gallaher. " They do credit to your heart an' head."

" Sure, she doesn't owe much gratitude to you, anyhow," said Mrs. Gallaher rather heatedly. " Whin did you iver give her the dacint word ? "

" I appeal to my frind, Johnnie Munro," remarked Mr. Casey quickly. " Is this to be an era of peace or is it not ? Spake up, Johnnie."

" Mrs. Gallaher," said Mr. Munro solemnly, " Misther Casey an' me have become the bist of frinds and I'll take it kindly if you'll fall into line."

" Anything that'll be for her benefit," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, seating herself on the other side of Mrs. Mulligan and regarding the old woman with rapturous admiration, " is good enough for

the likes of me. If I could be a frind of hers as I am in my heart of hearts, an' wait on her an' smooth the thorns out of her path! God love her! I can't say any more."

Overcome with her emotions, Mrs. Gallaher burst into tears. Mrs. Mulligan remained unmoved. Turning in his chair again, Mr. Casey contemplated Mrs. Gallaher with surprise.

"What's the matter with the woman?" he asked.

"Och, how can you ask me such a question as that!" said Mrs. Gallaher reproachfully, taking her hands from her face to stare at him. "Whin I think of all the thrials an' thrubbles she's gone through; all the sorras that no one knows but her own lonely heart; without a friend or a word of kindness from livin' soul, sure I thremble to the marra of my bones!"

"But all that is over now," explained Mr. Casey. "If I may judge from prisint appearances an' from what my frind Mr. Munro tells me, Mrs. Mulligan is, at all events, placed beyond the reach of want."

"Sure, what is that!" protested Mrs. Gallaher. "Is it everything just to have enough to ate an' dhrink? Has a lone woman nothin' but a stummick? Aren't her feelin's to be consulted?"

"Ah, Misther Casey," suggested Mrs. Munro, comfortably smoothing out her dress at the knees. "don't be too harrd on Mrs. Gallaher. She has a good, kind heart."

"Thank God, I have!" cried Mrs. Gallaher vehemently. "Thank God, though I'm nayther rich nor young, I have a heart to fale for one that has suffered! An' sure," she added, appealing

joyously to all, "if she has had her sorras an' thrials, isn't it glad an' thankful we should be to see her here now, happy an' contínted, an' blest with the bist of health, thanks be to God!"

Of all present the square-faced old woman on the sofa seemed the least impressed by these burning words. Indeed, she made no sign at all of being conscious of Mrs. Gallaher's presence—although the latter had moved quite close to her—but merely took her black pipe from her mouth to expectorate on the hearthrug, after which she wiped her lips with her palm.

Some of the young men from the bar, overcome with curiosity, had already entered the room. They were joyously welcomed by Mr. Munro, and speedily followed by the remainder. The room, in fact, became so thronged, that Mrs. Gallaher repeatedly pushed aside several who incautiously stood in front of Mrs. Mulligan.

"Don't dar to kape the light from her!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher indignantly. "Let her brathe the pure air of heavin! Have you no manners or respict for her good, honist heart!"

A number of girls had already arrived, and some one, inspired by their appearance, called loudly for a dance. A fiddler was secured, tables and chairs cleared away, and the floor became covered with jigging couples. Returning late from a quiet walk along the country roads, Mr. Pepper had to force his way upstairs, mentally resolving that his stay in Carrigmore should be as brief as possible.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECRET OUT.

THE following day the gaiety in the "Horse and Car" was at its highest, when James Donohue, crossing the square from the Inn, heard a low whistle, and saw Mr. Gallaher beckoning to him in front of the Stores.

"In the name of all that's wondherful, James," asked Mr. Gallaher, "what sort of divilmint's goin' on there at all?"

"They're just havin' some dancin' an' singin'," replied James. "It's changed times over there."

"Well, well," observed Mr. Gallaher, staring over the young man's shoulder in the same direction, "it bates me altogether. All in the coorse of a few days. Misther Munro used to be a patthern of law an' ordher. Is he in his sober sinses, I wondher?"

"Not at prisint, anyhow," returned James. "I left him as dhrunk as a lord."

"D'you tell me so! To think of that! What's come over him?" remarked Mr. Gallaher, adding more gravely: "An' is Jack in the midst of all this?"

"Jack's all right," replied James sighing. "He's sittin' on the sofa beside Miss Munro."

"That's one of thim things, James, betwixt me an' you," said Mr. Gallaher, lowering his voice confidentially, "that I can't make up my mind about at all. You know, as well as I do, James, how Mrs. Gallaher goes on about Jack marryin' Kate Munro. She's death on it, an' that's the only way to put it. But I'm not so sartin' about it myself. Kate's right enough—I've nothin' agin her—and she'd make a good, sinsible wife for any man. But look at the way her father's goin' on now! Drinkin' an' roarin' an' shoutin.' How long will the 'Horse an' Car' last at that gait o' goin'?"

"Sure, that doesn't matther now," said James gloomily, "whin Miss Munro's to be a millionaire."

Placing a hand on the young man's shoulder, Mr. Gallaher turned him round and gazed curiously into his downcast face.

"What's the matther with you, James?" he asked. "Are you not feelin' well?"

"I am, sir," answered James, looking frankly at him. "I'm in very good health, thanks be to God!"

"Aymin. I hope so," said Mr. Gallaher gravely. "Your father was a good, dacint man, James, an' he an' me were the bist of frinds. For the sake of his mimory, an' for your own sake, James, I wouldn't like anything to go wrong with you."

"There's nothin' wrong with me, Misther Gallaher," observed James, with some surprise. "What put that into your head?"

"You said just now," explained Mr. Gallaher in a

melancholy voice, "that Kate Munro ud be a millionaire. Now, James, thim wild words shows me your mind's not right. There's something wrong with you."

"Why, sir," said James, "I thought ivrybody knew by this time that Mrs. Mulligan, anyhow's a millionaire; an', of coorse, Miss Munro'll come in for all that whin the ould woman dies."

Mr. Gallaher was silent. He looked at James's face, and then down at his boots: finally, he began to feel in one of his pockets for his pipe.

"Have you time to come in for a smoke, James?" he asked in a kind, sympathetic voice.

"No, thanks, Misther Gallaher," replied James, holding out his hand. "I must be gettin' home."

Returning the pipe to his pocket Mr. Gallaher took the young man by the arm and walked him twice up and down a few paces before the doorway.

"James," said he, "do you think it right to be makin' a joke at the ixpense of an ould frind of your father?"

"Make a joke, sir!" said James astonished. "What joke?"

"This rigmarole about Mrs. Mulligan bein' a millionaire," explained Mr. Gallaher reproachfully, looking with some sternness into James's surprised face.

"Why, the whole town's talkin' o' that, sir," returned James. "I wondher you didn't hear about it! For I belave Mrs. Gallaher knew it before anyone else. Misther Pepper kem over from London about it. Some man that was a cousin or somethin' of Mrs. Mulligan died in America and left her millions—some say twinty an' some ten

—but millions, anyhow. There's no joke or lie about it at all. I'd forgit myself more than I'd be able to desave you, sir, for the sake of a joke."

Mr. Gallaher now gripped James's arm so hard and persistently that the young man winced, although he did not complain. Finally, when released, he rubbed his arm a little, then held out his hand again.

"I'll say good-night, Misther Gallaher," said he. "Jack'll be able to tell you more particulars than I know. I've only tould what I've heard talked about all over the town."

Mr. Gallaher took the proffered hand and held it a few moments, when he let it drop without a word; and after James Donohue had disappeared down the street, stood gazing towards the brilliant windows of the Inn with his mouth wide open. Presently, returning to the shop, he went behind the counter and sat down on an oil cask.

"If you please, Misther Gallaher——" said a weak voice.

Turning about, Mr. Gallaher saw a small boy's head barely on a level with the counter.

"What is it, sonny?" he asked. "D'you want anything?"

"What I asked you for," returned the boy. "I've bin here for tin minutes."

"Is it thryin' to humbug me, y'are?" inquired Mr. Gallaher. "An' you only nine year ould?"

"I am not," said the small boy stoutly. "I've bin here more'n tin minutes axin for a box of matches."

"Faith, then, I must have bin in a dhrame," observed Mr. Gallaher, slowly pulling a small

parcel from under the counter and handing it to the little customer. "Here y'are, anyhow."

"What's this, sir?" asked the boy.

"A pound o' candles," explained Mr. Gallaher. "Isn't that what you want?"

"A box of matches!" shouted the boy, pushing the candles back.

"All right, all right, sonny; don't get vexed," remarked Mr. Gallaher kindly. "All in good time. There's a time for ivrything an' ivrything in its proper place. A pound o' matches. There! you're right this time!"

The boy took the matches, threw a halfpenny on the counter and raced off. Taking up the coin, Mr. Gallaher slowly fingered it, leaning easily on the counter and looking into space. By and by a figure came in from the street and passed him.

"Hullo, Jack!" exclaimed Mr. Gallaher, starting as from a dream, at the same time hurriedly raising the lid of the counter to let himself out. "Hould on a momint! What's this, Jack," he asked, seizing his son's arm, "about someone dyin' an' lavin' Mrs. Mulligan a million of matches?"

"A million o' what, father?" asked Jack.

"There's somethin' the matther with my head," observed Mr. Gallaher, dropping Jack's arm and following him into the back parlour. "But there was a boy here an' he was tellin' me some rigmarole about Mrs. Mulligan bein' a millionaire, or maybe I fell aslape an' dhreamt it."

"Sure, there's no rigmarole about it, whoivir told you," said Jack, dropping wearily into a chair. "It's as thrue as gospel. Who was the boy that told you?"

"It wasn't a boy," returned Mr. Gallaher. "It was a young man. His name's Donohue. A millionaire? Is this the back parlour I'm standin' in?"

"Oh, you're wide awake," said Jack. "And it's all thrue. It was to be kept a great saycrit, but, of coorse, thim things can't be kept from the world."

"Whisht!" exclaimed Mr. Gallaher, starting as he heard the whish of his wife's skirts. "There's your mother. She's goin' upstairs. Maybe she's tired an' wants to go to bed. Maybe she's—— Jack, I'm not worthy of that woman!"

"None of us are," remarked Jack.

"She's a grand woman!" exclaimed Mr. Gallaher enthusiastically. "I'm an ould ijit. I'm a good-for-nothin' ould fool, Jack."

"Oh, no, you're not!" protested Jack.

"I am!" said his father. "Don't talk to me. I ought to know. What right have I to be married to a woman with a head like that? What have I ivir done to desarve an honour like that? I'm not fit to clane her boots!"

Jack made no remark, and his father, after a while, shaking his head with an air of solemnity, slowly went upstairs, where he found Mrs. Gallaher in the agony of a headache, her face buried in the cool pillows.

"I've just been tellin' Jack," observed Mr. Gallaher, addressing her from the middle of the room, "that I'm not fit to clane your boots. I want now, in the most sincare an' contrite manner, to repate thim words in your prisence, and, furthermore, to add, with the help of God and a clear mind,

that I dunno what in the name of God you saw in me at all to marry the likes o' me."

"My head's splittin' open, now," said Mrs. Gallaher pettishly, "an' I want to thry an' get a slape."

"Slape, an' God be with you!" said Mr. Gallaher, reverently inclining his head towards her. "But I thought I'd aise my mind a bit by tellin' you what I think of myself an' the fool I've been all these years married to a woman further above me nor the stars of heaven. That's all," he added, making towards the door. "Maybe I could say more an' maybe I could say less, but I'll——"

As he turned for a last adoring look at the figure on the bed, he knocked his face against the door, and felt disinclined, for the moment, to continue his remarks. He went downstairs, where he found Jack bending forward in a chair and sending the smoke from a cigarette curling up the chimney.

"Jack," said Mr. Gallaher, putting both hands on Jack's shoulders as the latter sat up, "I want you to give me a saycrid promise. Whin I began life I had a hard, bitther time before I could ate a bit o' bread with aise or comfort. An' many's the time I lay awake in the cowld winter nights an' said if God saw fit to make me a rich man I'd nivir forget the Poor. Now, what I meant by a rich man was a man with a few hundhred pounds saved in the bank. I nivir saved thim, Jack, but here you are, thank God, bright an' young; and I want you to promise me that you'll give some of this millions to the Poor. You might be inclined to forgit thim whin you're wrapped in furs an' sarvints in livery dance attindince on you, but rimimber the

words of your ould father, Jack, whin I'm in my cowld grave—Nivir forget the sorras of the Poor!"

Jack gave this promise, seeing how anxious his father was on the subject, and Mr. Gallaher, having gratefully shaken hands with him, went into the dark shop and wept silently behind the counter.

CHAPTER X.

MR. CASEY AMAZED.

MAKING his way meanwhile to the furthest end of the main street, James Donohue, with timid hand, pushed open the door of the *Flashlight* office and entered. Near the window Mr. Casey was seated at his desk, busy writing an editorial. Glancing up when his visitor appeared, his contracted brows relaxed

"Is that yourself, James? It's glad I am to see you!" said he. "Just take a sate now for a momint and I'll be ready for you."

"If it's inconvanient to you, sir," observed James Donohue, half repenting his visit, "I'll come agin another time."

"By no manner o' manes!" said Mr. Casey cheerily. "I'm just dashin' off a few remarks for the *Flashlight*. Don't go away."

Muttering thanks, James sat down, placing his hat on his knees, gazing bashfully round at the poorly furnished apartment and at the back of the editor. Presently, Mr. Casey, flinging down his pencil, approached him, holding a long sheet of paper.

"Would you like to hear this," he asked, "before

the public get a houlf of it? It's a great privelege and agin the etiquette of the Press; but, as it's yourself, I'll stretch a pint."

Mr. Donohue expressed himself proud and delighted at being treated as someone apart from the common public. Whereupon Mr. Casey, clearing his throat, and expanding his chest, read the editorial in a loud voice from beginning to end. After which, James Donohue declared that it was the finest thing he had ever listened to.

"No, no," protested Mr. Casey, with thinly disguised modesty, throwing the paper carelessly back on the desk. "I'm not in my best forrum. Whin I'm in my best forrum I write thunder an' lightnin'. That article's poor stuff. Well, James, what can I do for you?"

At this direct question James began to fumble with his hat, dropped it, picked it up and squeezed it out of shape between his knees.

"I'm very sorry for thrubbling you, Misther Casey," he began, gazing nervously over the editor's head at a crack in the ink-stained wall. "But, the fact is, I'm in want of money."

"We're all in want of money, James," observed Mr. Casey cheerfully. "From the peer to the peasant."

"That little matther of twinty-five pounds I lent you, sir," said James, "last summer—if it would be convanient, I'd be glad to have it."

"And if it wasn't convanient, James?" suggested Mr. Casey, becoming grave.

"Then," observed James, with a short laugh, "I sippose I'd have to do without it. But the fact is, I'm desperate hard up for some money. I want it

particular. I've somethin' importint to do with it. If you couldn't let me have the whole twinty-five, I'd take whativir you can give—say fifteen—say ten—pounds."

Folding his arms and knitting his brows, Mr. Casey paced, deep in thought, the entire length of the little office; and every time James glanced timidly at him, it seemed to him as if the face of the editor grew more and more sombre. At length, coming to a halt, Mr. Casey stared fixedly at James, and James looked bashfully aside.

"James," said Mr. Casey, in tones of deep emotion, "I can pay you the debt I owe you, and I shall do so, because you have always been a sincare, generous, open-hearted frind to me."

"Oh, not at all, sir!" protested James feebly.

"You have!" returned Mr. Casey. "You can't deny it. I can pay you, James, and I will, even though the effort throws me out, a pauper and an outcast, on the world."

Moved by these mournful words, James looked up quickly, and was further troubled by observing tears in Mr. Casey's eyes.

"I should be very sorry, sir," said the young man feelingly, "to get my money at such a price. I'd rather let it go!"

"Let me take your hand, James, a momint," said Mr. Casey, stepping softly to his side and grasping the strong brown hand which James instantly held out. "Thank you, James," he continued, pressing the fingers. "This is betther to me than fifty pounds. For it is the manly grasp of a true man. It fills my heart with joy. But, James, if you must have money, if you are detar-

mined to have it, you shall have it. I'll sell the goodwill of the *Flashlight*. It's all I've got except these few sticks of furniture and the clothes on my back. I'll sell them all, James. You shall have your twinty-five pounds. What does it matther afther all, if I am flung out on the sthreet? I've nivir been able to make both inds meet. I have wasted my ability, wasted talents that might have raised me to eminence in any other walk of life, throwin' pearls before swine. For the public, James, are swine, an' the advertisers that won't pay their accounts are worse than swine! But, say no more. The *Flashlight* must go. The furniture will go. If necessary, the clothes I'm wearin' must go!"

"Misther Casey," said James, rising and returning the pressure of the weak fingers which still twined round his hand, "I wouldn't have come here if I thought I'd have hurt your feelin's. No, sir, you won't sell anything for my sake. God forbid you should reduce yourself to beggary. I'll get the money somewhere else. I don't know where, but I'll raise it somehow."

"God bless you, God bless you, James!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, placing his sleeve across his tear-stained eyes. "I knew you had a heart of gold. The first money that comes in to me—an' there's a great deal of money owin' to me by subscribers and advertisers—the very first that comes in, you'll have, James!"

"Thank you, sir!" said James heartily. "That's very kind of you."

"It is not," protested Mr. Casey. "It's only what's due to you. I'll look on the repaymint of that loan as the most saycrid jooty of my life."

"Thank you, sir, agin," returned James; "I'm raley sorry for havin' upset you. I'll say good-bye now."

"Stay a momint, James," observed Mr. Casey, as the young man turned apologetically towards the door. "Would it be an impertinence on my part to ask you why you are so pressed for money at the prisint time?"

Turning back, James held his hat to his breast, looked down at the floor and shuffled his feet uneasily. Then he sat down again.

"If it's a great saycrit," remarked Mr. Casey kindly, noticing these signs of perturbation, "I don't want to hear it. It's your affair, not mine."

"Well, sir, I'll be candid with you," said James, looking up at last.

"You couldn't be anything else," returned Mr. Casey. "You were born candid and you'll die candid."

"I don't care much whin I die," said James in troubled voice. "But you won't brathe what I tell you, sir?"

"Consider your words, James, buried in the grave," said Mr. Casey, folding his arms and becoming deeply attentive.

Bending forward, James Donohue crushed his hat between his knees and gazed steadfastly at his boots.

"I've been foolin' myself for years," he confessed, "about Miss Munro."

"I saw it, I saw it!" exclaimed Mr. Casey. "But why should your hopes be foolish?"

"Because the only man she cares about, the only man she'll even look at," declared James, "is

the bist frind I have in the world. That's Jack Gallaher. And now I've thought the matther over, an' I think America's the place for me. That's why I want all the money I can scrape together. I might become a millionaire like others over there."

"Some people make millions, James," said Mr. Casey, "an' there's millions that don't. But d'you mane to tell me, do you raley mane to tell me, you'd run away from a girl in that way? Faint heart, you know, nivir won fair lady."

"I'll nivir win Kate Munro," said James, emphatically shaking his head. "I know that too well. Now an' agin, I fancied I saw signs of her meltin'. But I desaved myself. The other day I met her in the hall of the 'Horse an' Car,' and whin I said, 'I hope I see you well, Miss Munro——'"

He paused, overcome with emotion, and Mr. Casey looked down at him with deep compassion.

"Be calm, James," said the editor, feelingly. "Be calm, I beg. What did she say?"

"She said," explained James, making a convulsive effort at self-control, "she said: 'I'm very well, thank you.'"

"Is that all?" asked Mr. Casey, after a pause of astonishment.

"Isn't that enough?" returned James.

"But that sames a very raisinable answer to your question," remarked Mr. Casey.

"Ah!" said James Donohue, heaving a deep sigh. "It was the cowld tone of her voice an' the witherin' look in her eye. No, Misther Casey, she'll nivir be mine. I nivir had much of a chance at the best of times, but now that she's to be a

millionaire, I haven't even the ghost of a chance."

"James, what are you sayin'?" said Mr. Casey amazed. "Miss Munro a millionaire?"

"Did you not hear that, sir?" said James, looking up at him with surprise. "Sure, it's no saycrit now. All the town's talkin' of it. Someone died in America and left Mrs. Mulligan five or six millions of money."

"Glory be to God! is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Casey.

His mouth opened, his eyes dilated; he clutched himself by the hair.

"That's why Misther Pepper kem here," explained James. "An' he's to bring back Mrs. Mulligan to London, an' then to America with him. An', of coorse, she has no relations to lave her money to but the Munros."

Mr. Casey made no response. He simply slapped his hat on the back of his head; and James Donohue, hastily rising and stepping aside, saw him for an instant, like a flash as he vanished through the door.

A few minutes later Mr. Casey, bursting into the smoke room of the "Horse and Car," found Mr. Pepper standing there with Mr. Munro, facing him—Mr. Pepper talking more loudly than was usual with him and the Innkeeper rubbing his hands together as he listened deferentially.

"But it is of no consequence now," Mr. Pepper was saying, "who first broke the promise of secrecy. The fact is that the matter is common property."

"I'm raley very sorry, sir," observed Mr. Munro humbly. "It wasn't me, an' I'm very sartin' it

wasn't Mrs. Munro. But, as you say, it can't be helped now, an' we must only make the bist of it."

"Precisely," returned Mr. Pepper, who seemed pale with suppressed indignation. "It was perhaps too much to hope that the matter could be kept private for any length of time. But my point now is, that Mrs. Mulligan must come with me to London without any unnecessary delay. Have you made her fully acquainted with that?"

Mr. Munro began to shuffle his feet about, looked uneasily under his eyes towards the dumfoundered Mr. Casey, and smiled in a helpless way.

"I did my best, sir," he replied. "But, raley, it's very hard to make the ould crature undherstand."

"Then," interrupted Mr. Pepper impatiently, "bring her here. I'll explain everything to her."

"Sartinly, sir, sartinly," responded Mr. Munro, apparently glad of the chance of escape and starting as he spoke from the room.

Sitting down, Mr. Pepper drummed his fingers on the table and looked into the fireplace. Mr. Casey, who had been listening open-mouthed at a respectful distance, now coughed behind his hand. Starting, Mr. Pepper turned and slightly nodded.

"It's very awkward, Mr. Casey," he observed, and Mr. Casey, with glad alacrity, ventured forward; "but I suppose it is the usual result of asking women to keep a secret. This news about Mrs. Mulligan's legacy is now common property. Of course, you have heard of it?"

"Well, sir, just a rumour or two," replied Mr. Casey, with extreme caution. "Is it thrue that she has been left twenty millions?"

"No, not so much," said Mr. Pepper. "That is the way things get exaggerated. Probably three or four million dollars, roughly speaking. As you are an editor, and have considerable influence, perhaps you would be good enough to try and stem the excitement which seems gathering? It is a troublesome matter to manage this old woman; and, really, in matters of business, the less excitement there is the better."

"I quite agree with you, sir," exclaimed Mr. Casey, "and in this matther, sir, be plaised to considher the *Flashlight* at your sarvice. Any communication you wish to convey to the public shall receive prompt attention."

"I am obliged to you," returned Mr. Pepper stiffly. "But I never write letters to the Press. I don't believe in doing so. But you, who are a skilled journalist, can stem the tide of exaggeration. I simply want to get away to London as quickly as possible without any fuss."

"I undherstand you, sir, parfictly," said Mr. Casey, who could scarcely credit his senses. "The next issue of the *Flashlight* will set you perfectly at your aise. You may rely on me."

"Thank you," returned Mr. Pepper coldly.

At the same instant Mrs. Mulligan came in, closely followed by Mr. Munro and Mrs. Gallaher. Rising, Mr. Pepper faced round.

"Now, Mrs. Mulligan," said he, "I just want you to understand one or two simple facts. You have been left a legacy—that you have been informed of—— It is not of importance at the present moment, that you should understand how much or how little."

Halting opposite to him, Mrs. Mulligan rested her hands on the top of her stick.

"Is it a hundhred pound?" she asked.

"It is more, much more, than that," answered Mr. Pepper. "But, as I have said——"

"Hould on now," interrupted Mrs. Mulligan. "Hould on now, achushla. Is there enough money to opin a public-house? That's the only kind o' house I wish to ind my days in. A nate, tidy little bit of a public-house."

"You just attend to me," said Mr. Pepper sternly. "Never mind your plans for the future. You have been left enough to keep you in comfort, in affluence——"

"Arra, what kind o' thing is that?" interrupted Mrs. Mulligan again, blinking at him cunningly through half-closed eyes.

"You must listen to what I say," continued Mr. Pepper more impatiently. "You must prepare yourself for a journey to London. There you will learn more than you know at present."

"Is it me crass the wather?" exclaimed Mrs. Mulligan indignantly. "The divil a fut!"

With that she walked deliberately past Mr. Casey and sat down on the sofa, setting her determined face before Mr. Pepper's angry stare.

"It will be best for you," said he, "and best for your friends here to make you reconsider your decision. I say to London you must come, and that speedily. My time is too precious to waste in arguing with you."

Mrs. Gallaher now stepped to the front, and, folding her hands on her bosom, looked up with her most charming expression at Mr. Pepper.

"Sure, Misther Pepper, sir," said she, "isn't it very short notice for an ould woman that has nivir been on the say, God bless her! Lave her to us, sir, an' we'll coax her to it in good time. Don't hurry her, sir. Her heart's with her own people and the thrue frinds that she knows 'd lay down their lives for her."

"I don't see what business it is of yours," said Mr. Pepper sternly; then turning to Mr. Munro: "I leave this matter in your hands now, Mr. Munro, and hold you responsible for the consequences."

He pulled the lappets of his coat straight with short jerks as he spoke, and, with stiff upper lip, walked out of the room.

CHAPTER XI.

HYPOCRITES AND OTHERS.

"SURE, isn't he the hard man!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher in accents of disgust. "There's no talkin' with him at all. He doesn't undherstand. To hurry an' harry her that we want to kape with us now that she's the light of our eyes an' the ji of our hearts—to hurry an' harry her on to the wild say and to a place where thousinds of mad people race about the sthreets! Sure, Mrs. Mulligan, darlin', you were quite right to give him the short answer. It's yourself that knows, darlin', that once you lave your frinds and your happy home God only knows what 'ud become of you!"

"I'm well able to take care of mysilf," observed Mrs. Mulligan, "without any advice ayther from rale frinds or from false ones."

"God love you, of coorse y'are!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher readily. "An' why not? Haven't you a rale sinsible head on your shoulders as well as a lovin' heart in your buzzum?"

This reference seemed to remind Mrs. Mulligan of her pipe, which she produced after some groping, and began to fill in a silent, methodical manner.

"Won't you take a cheer, Mrs. Gallaher, mem?" requested Mr. Munro in his politest English.

"Sure, thank you, Misther Munro," replied Mrs. Gallaher joyously, "I'll sate myself, if I may, beside Mrs. Mulligan. An' why not? Isn't she a relation of my own? My own gran'-mother was a Mulligan."

At this unexpected revelation Mr. Munro put his hands under his coat-tails and looked at Mr. Casey, who took himself by the scanty beard and looked at Mr. Munro. As for Mrs. Mulligan, she ceased, for the moment, to fill her pipe, moving as far as possible on the sofa from Mrs. Gallaher, and looking sideways at her with stern distaste.

"I niver heard that your gran'-mother was a Mulligan," said the old woman with conviction; "an' what's more, I don't belave it."

Mrs. Gallaher instantly braced herself to reply to this challenge, but, before she could speak, a tall, powerful, healthy-faced clergyman entered, exclaiming:

"God save all here!"

It was Father Cavanagh, the respected and popular parish priest. At his entry everyone, save Mrs. Mulligan, rose to their feet and remained standing.

"Sit down, frinds, sit down!" said he, raising his right hand. "I came to see our good frind, Mrs. Mulligan, here." Drawing a chair up in front of her, he sat down and bent forward to the old woman, who, holding her unlit pipe in the hollow of her hand, stared curiously at him. "An' how are you, Mrs. Mulligan? I hope I see you well?"

"Troth, your rivirence," she replied, "I'm in rale good health, thank God!"

"Amin," returned Father Cavanagh. "Your wondherful good fortune hasn't turned your head, then?"

"The divil a turn!" remarked Mrs. Mulligan, "beggin your rivirence's pardin. The only thing that thrubbles me is the talk of hypocrites."

"You must be prepared," said Father Cavanagh gravely, "for plinty of false frinds now, plinty of people who will come round you and take an intherest in you for the sake of your money. You must be on your guard against them. I spake for your own good."

"The soft voice of him!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, enthusiastically, "an' him so sthrong an' large!"

"You must be on your guard," continued Father Cavanagh to Mrs. Mulligan, "aginst false frinds who will come like moths round the wick of a lighted candle. An' I want to talk to you about yourself. You don't realize yet the great fortune that has happened to you. But you will in time. And when that time comes, you must be on your guard against yourself."

"Lis'en to him, Mrs. Mulligan, darlin'!" said Mrs. Gallaher eagerly, bending towards the impassive old woman, "it's your parish praste,the good Father, that's spakin' to you for your own good."

"Sure, I'm not deaf," observed Mrs. Mulligan. "Ould as I am, I kin hear his ivry word."

"You will thry and rimimber," said Father Cavanagh impressively, "in your hour of affluence, that there are higher things to be considered than wealth and riches. You'll try and rimimber that the eternal things are more important than the

earthly ones. Now, my good friend, you're an ould woman; you're sthrong and hearty, and may live many years yet—I hope you will! But, in the ordinary coorse, you must soon prepare for the life beyond the grave. You can't take money with you to the other world, Mrs. Mulligan. It would do you no good there."

"Couldn't I lave some," suggested Mrs. Mulligan, "for masses for my sowl?".

"You could, and I sincerely hope you will," replied Father Cavanagh. "The more you lave the betther for your soul. Lave money to your parish church here—not to me, for I don't want it—and I may be dead and gone before yourself—but rimimber your own parish and the benefits of prayer."

"Faith, your rivirence," observed Mrs. Mulligan, "I dunno what parish I belong to. I haven't bin inside a chapel now for twinty year."

Father Cavanagh looked graver than before; indeed, somewhat shocked.

"You belong," he returned firmly, "to the parish of Carrigmore, where you were born and baptized. And I hope now you'll make a new start and attind to your religious jooties, because you must be a patthern now to thim that haven't been blest with the fortune that has fallen to your lot."

Mr. Casey, who, for some time had been whispering behind his hand to Mr. Munro, now advanced towards the clergyman.

"If you'll excuse me, Father," he observed, "I'd like to have a word with my frind, Misther Munro, in private. May we lave the room?"

"Sartinly, sartinly," said Father Cavanagh, sitting up and nodding.

Forthwith, Mr. Casey, taking Mr. Munro by the arm, led him from the room, out through the hall past the noisy bar, and upstairs to Mr. Munro's own private apartment, where a sideboard and table were liberally decorated with empty bottles, tumblers and decanters. A lamp with a green shade gave a dim light and Mr. Casey turned up the wick.

"Throw yourself into that chair, Misther Munro," said he, "an' I'll sit here. The time has come for a little sarious conversation."

"Spake on, Editorial!" said Mr. Munro smiling as he sank into the chair indicated.

"You were good enough," observed Mr. Casey, tucking up his coat tails preparatory to seating himself, "to tendher the olive branch of frindship to me and I accepted it."

"You did," returned Mr. Munro; "and right glad I am of it."

"Are these words from your heart?" inquired Mr. Casey, bending forward to scrutinize him with serious eyes.

"From the very bottom of my heart!" replied Mr. Munro.

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, apparently relieved. "I feared a thrap; I feared desate. I dunno what I didn't fear. Because—lis'en to me—I may have written in an editorial way many things that seemed hard an' bitther about you; but, in my heart of hearts, I meant well. I was always your frind, in my heart of hearts."

"I belave that!" cried Mr. Munro, starting up.

"An' we'll dhrink a cup of kindness yet for the days of auld lang syne!"

Chanting these words in a cracked falsetto, but with evident gusto, he searched amongst the glassware of the sideboard for decanter and tumblers; and presently both men were toasting each other's healths with an enthusiasm which increased in intensity with every drink.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Gallaher, having received a mild hint from Father Cavanagh, that he wished to be alone with Mrs. Mulligan for the sake of the latter's spiritual welfare, made her way out of the Inn to her own home. She found her husband and son in the back parlour with a table between them.

"You look thrubbled," said Mr. Gallaher, as he glanced round at his wife's ruffled brows.

"Mrs. Mulligan must be got away from the Munros!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher; "an' the sooner the betther!"

"How? Got away? Where? What's wrong with her?" asked Mr. Gallaher in some alarm.

"There are too many plotthers an' connivers about her," said Mrs. Gallaher as she took off her shawl. "An' they're stuffin' her with dhrinkin' an' lies. I dunno what may be the ind of it. She must be got away."

"But got away where?" repeated her husband.

"Here!" replied his wife, flashing her dark eyes impatiently on him. "Isn't this the proper place for her where she'll resave care an' kindness? Haven't I as much right to her as the Munros? Wasn't my gran'-mother a Mulligan?"

"An O'Mulligan I always heard you say," suggested Mr. Gallaher mildly.

"An' what's the differ betwixt an O'Mulligan an' a Mulligan?" demanded Mrs. Gallaher with such sharp emphasis that Mr. Gallaher instantly subsided back in his chair. "Isn't her blood in my veins? An' haven't I as much right to her as the Munros have? She must be brought here, cost what it will."

"That'll be a difficult job, mother," suggested Jack.

"Jack," observed his father gravely, "there's no denyin' that; and I would even go further nor that, an' say it was almost impossible. But, Jack, whin your mother makes up her mind you may considher it done; for there's no brain from this to Cork the aiqual of your mother's brain. If I hadn't been a born fool I'd have found that out years ago. But, thank God! it's nivir too late to mind."

"I'm goin' upstairs now," observed Mrs. Gallaher in a milder tone. "I've got a lot to do, and a lot to think about. Jack, you might come up to me in a few minutes. I've somethin' to say to you."

"All right, mother," said Jack.

When she went upstairs, father and son remained for some minutes looking at one another in silent amazement.

"Jack," said Mr. Gallaher at last, "your mother's a wondherful woman. You're not the lad to forget her, I know, whin you get the handlin' of the money. Let her have what she fancies, Jack, if it is silks an' satins,; if it is diamonds and jools for her hair and her hands. Let her have thim, Jack. She's worthy of it all."

"I know that well," assented Jack. "I'm not likely to forget it."

"No, you are not, my son," observed Mr. Gallaher thoughtfully. "Don't you worry about me, Jack. Let your mother have her heart's desire. As for me, a bit of a farm of fifty or sixty acres to end my days on will be enough. I don't care for skinaydherin' about the world an' livin' in castles an' big hotels. A dacint little farm and a few cows just to give me somethin' to do, that's all I want, Jack. An' now, my son, maybe you'd betther go up to your mother. Whativer she says to you, hould fast an' stan' by an' threasure thim in your heart for her words are worth their weight in goold."

Jack at once started upstairs. Then, lighting his pipe, Mr. Gallaher lay back in his chair, smiling with childlike pleasure as he watched the smoke slowly disappearing towards the ceiling.

CHAPTER XII.

EJECTION OF MRS. GALLAHER.

IMPRESSED by Mr. Pepper's growing impatience at Mrs. Mulligan's procrastination, the astute Mr. Casey considered it advisable to call a family council. Assembling them in the smoke room, he addressed them from his seat at the table.

" It's quite evidint to me," said he, " that Misther Pepper won't put up with this delay much longer. And now, I put it to you : what do you intind to do ? He holds all the cards in his hands, and we're bound to consider his wishes. I put it to you now, Misther Munro, and I put it to you, Mrs. Mulligan, more particularly, what d'you propose to do ? "

" Is it talkin' about me goin' acrass the wather ? " asked Mrs. Mulligan from her seat on the sofa.

" Well, that's the long an' short of it," replied Mr. Casey. " You've got to go soon or stay. Now, it's evidint that Misther Pepper wants you to go, and I want to know what you intind to do."

" The divil a foot I'll set acrass the say," said Mrs. Mulligan emphatically ; and giving a side glance at Kate who was near her, " until Kate here's married an' done for."

" Allow me now," observed Mr. Casey, holding

up his hand. " I don't think you quite comprehind the sarcumstances or the sariousness of this decision. What's the need of hurryin' Kate into mathrimony ? "

" None at all, Misther Casey," interrupted Kate smiling. " I'm in no hurry."

" Bedad, y'are ! " said Mrs. Mulligan, stamping her stick. " An' I've got a fine dacint lad in my eye for you. Misther Donohue's the boy I'm thinkin' of. As for Jack Gallaher, put him out of your head. If he was an angel in glory, I wouldn't touch him on account of his mother. Mrs. Gallaher's a woman I don't want to see in this house or anywhere else. There isn't a straight dhrop of blood in her body. She doesn't desave me with her oily ways. It's not so long since she would have kicked me out on the roadside if she had the power."

At this vengeful tirade, uttered with vehemence, Mr. Casey exchanged a meaning glance with Mr. Munro, who was smiling, with his back to the fireplace and his coat tails under his arms. Sucking in her jaws, Mrs. Mulligan took out her pipe and prepared to smoke.

" I don't want to difind Mrs. Gallaher," observed Kate, turning mildly to her grand-aunt. " I of'en thought she was over anxious. It was nivir my place to say so to a woman of her age. But Jack Gallaher doesn't care about me. I don't blame him. And I don't see why you should blame him."

" Nayther him or his mother," said Mrs. Mulligan, stamping her stick again, " will ivir touch a pinny of my money. That's as sartin' as death."

"Well, now, allow me," observed Mr. Casey. "Mrs. Mulligan's will must be law in this matther. But let us return to the pint. There should be no rushin' Kate into mathrimony, because, in the first place, Misther Pepper has to get back to London without delay, and, in the second place, Miss Kate Munro can afford to wait. It's not the son of a counthry shopkeeper she need worry about now. She can aspire to the hand of a nobleman or the editor of a great daily paper. As far as I can see, Misther Munro, you have not yet realized your prisint position—the vast difference there is now in your position towards what it was. For the hand of your daughter noblemen will go on bendid knee. For the honour of your acquaintinse the best families of the British aristocracy will vie with one another. Make no mistake about it. Realize your exalted position and rise to the occasion!"

All present remained deeply impressed by these remarks until the door was opened and Mrs. Gallaher burst in, radiantly smiling.

"I couldn't rest," she exclaimed joyfully, "till I'd come to have a look at you all, to see if you were in good health an' spirits. Sure, I wouldn't rest aisy on my pilla at night if I thought there was the shadda of a cloud hanging over this house where I always found lovin' hearts an' kind words."

She spoke towards Mrs. Mulligan, who, smoking her old clay pipe, relaxed not a line of her grim features. Mrs. Munro turned sideways in her seat and gazed nervously at her aunt while Kate blushed and stared at the floor.

Alarmed by the chilling silence with which

her rapturous words were received, Mrs. Gallaher looked around more anxiously for sympathy.

"May I sit beside you, ma'am?" she asked of Mrs. Mulligan. "Now that my heart's at rest seein' you all, an' I want to sit beside one that knows what thrubble is an' has shed many an' many a bitther tear of her own!"

"The sorra a tear I ivir shed," observed Mrs. Mulligan sternly. "An' as for sittin' beside me, the divil a sit you'll sit."

At this direct repulse Mrs. Gallaher's face lengthened. She put a hand behind her to grasp the table.

"You don't mane that, ma'am?" said she falteringly. "Me that always had the heart to fale for you whin others were aginst you!"

"Kape your heart to yourself," returned Mrs. Mulligan more sternly. "I wouldn't fade a dog on it!"

Gasping and turning pale, Mrs. Gallaher sank down on the nearest chair. In the silence that followed Mr. Casey was heard striking a match on the sole of his boot. Then Mr. Munro, having cleared his throat and felt his chin, assumed a judicial expression.

"The fact is, Mrs. Gallaher," he observed, "you don't same to rekonize the althered conditions of things. The Munro family are not as they were. They are elevated. In future, ma'am, you will be good enough to undherstand that we're not common an' we're not vulgar. We have to be careful in our choice of compiny."

"Mrs. Munro, darlin'," gasped Mrs. Gallaher, "tell your good husbind not to use thim cruel

words to one that has loved you an' comforted you whin sickness or sorra was in your path. I can't bear it, even whin spoken for sport."

"I don't want to hurt you, Mrs. Gallaher," said Mrs. Munro, speaking as from the depths of her double chin. "But what Aunt Mulligan says we must abide by."

"And Aunt Mulligan," explained Mr. Munro, "doesn't want you, Mrs. Gallaher, an' won't have you!"

"An' the sooner you get out of this the betther!" added Mrs. Mulligan angrily.

"Kate!" cried Mrs. Gallaher, jumping up and approaching the girl with outstretched hands, "you wouldn't turn your back on the mother of your Jack!"

Kate made no rejoinder to this appeal. She pressed her hands harder between her knees, and with bent head stared steadfastly at the floor.

"Sure, it will kill him!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher bursting at last into tears. "It will kill him an' kill me! I can't belave it. I can't belave you'd turn on me, all of you, like this!"

She appealed to them again with dumb show of hands and tear-stained face, but they turned from her in silence. Mr. Casey puffed heavily at his cigar.

"We're not common people," observed Mr. Munro at length. "An' we can't in future associate with common people. If you won't go it will be my painful jooty to ring up the Slogger."

At this threat Mrs. Gallaher gathered her shawl tightly about her head, and, drawing herself up, walked firmly to the door. But when it was closed behind her, and she was out again in the open, her

dignity forsook her. She made her way across to the Stores, blinded with hot tears. The first person she met in the hallway of her own house was Jack. She instantly threw herself on his breast.

"What's the matther, mother?" he asked, striving to look at her face.

"They've turned me out, Jack!" sobbed his mother. "The Munros have ordhered me out."

"Turned you out!" exclaimed Jack fiercely. "By heaven, I'll go over an' smash the whole place to smithereens! Let me go!"

"No, no, Jack. Let them alone," said his mother, holding him. "The money has turned their brains. They may get betther soon. But, oh, it's cruel hard, afther the way I've slaved for them. It's cruel, cruel hard!"

"D'you mane to say Kate was cruel to you, too?" asked Jack.

"She said no bitther things," replied his mother. "But I'm sure they've turned the girl's head. Oh, Jack, if you'd taken my advice long ago an' married her! Now it's too late."

"It's not too late!" said Jack, as his mother, taking her arms from his neck, groped her way inward by the counter. "Now, I'll do it!"

"Do what, Jack?" she asked tearfully, looking back at him from the end of the passage.

He struck his fist firmly on the counter.

"Marry her, in spite of them!" he exclaimed. "In spite of everything. Ay, everything can go now! I'll marry her now or die for it!"

His mother made no reply. She went upstairs and wept on her pillows.

Jack, however, remained in the darkened hallway, trembling with increasing passion; for, with him, passion increased rapidly, and disappeared only in a scene of violence. Conscious of this, his father, who had been seated under a swinging lamp in the far corner of the shop, carefully threaded his way through boxes and bags until he reached the counter. There he stood gazing at the face of his son, which was faintly illumined by the great light shining across the square from the windows of the "Horse and Car."

"Jack," whispered Mr. Gallaher anxiously, "what's it all about? What has happened?"

Jack's bosom was now rising and falling in short pantings, although he had tightly folded his arms in an effort at self-repression.

"They've put mother out," he replied.

"The Munros?" whispered his father.

"The Munros," answered Jack; then he started at the sound of his mother's sobbing. "But," he exclaimed suddenly, turning and striking his fist again on the counter in front of his father, who started upright, "I'll know the raisin of it! No one'll insult my mother!"

With that, he darted across the broad space of pavement, and his father, craning his neck with whitened face, over the old deal counter, saw the lithe figure of his son bound up the steps and disappear like a flash into the Inn.

The Munros, with Mr. Casey—now smoking his third cigar and radiant over a second tumbler of whisky—were still seated in family accord, when Jack Gallaher burst into the room.

"What have you done to mother?" he shouted,

bringing himself up short in the middle of the room.

As there was deadly menace, not only in his voice and attitude, but in his flashing eyes; and, as he first glanced at Mr. Casey, the latter quietly gathered up his tumbler and box of matches and crept without noise from the room.

"What's the matther with you, Misther Gallaher?" asked Mr. Munro from the hearthrug, vainly attempting bravado as he spread his trembling legs apart.

"What have you done to mother?" shouted Jack Gallaher again, barely able to articulate, his face deathly pale from intense rage.

Mr. Munro looked helplessly at his wife, who was now seated next Mrs. Mulligan on the sofa.

"Did anyone do anything to Mrs. Gallaher?" asked Mr. Munro generally. "I disremember."

"You disremember!" exclaimed Jack, striding towards him and fiercely seizing him by the lappets of the velvet coat. "You disr——"

A frantic pair of arms was flung round Jack and Kate screamed in his ear:

"Jack! Jack! don't hurt father. Don't do that!"

Rolling his shining eyes round, Jack saw Kate's soft face close, writhing with apprehension. Releasing Mr. Munro, he threw his right arm tightly round Kate.

"I'll make you all ate the words you used to mother!" he cried. "An' you, Kate Munro, I'll marry you because mother wants me to! D'you hear? Give your promise now! Out with it, or, by heaven! I'll sthrangle you!"

"You're a nice blaggard!" shouted Mrs. Mulligan from the sofa. "An' only I'm half dhrunk, I'd knock the head off you with my stick. Let go that girl! Don't you see you're chokin' her, you blaggard? Is there no man here to save her?"

"Ay!" said Jack, suddenly releasing Kate so that she staggered back and fell down at her mother's knees. "Ay, that's what I want—a man to fight! Show him to me! You won't bate me—any man in Carrigmore! I'll marry Kate Munro to plaise mother, an' no divil in or out o' hell'll stop me!"

He looked round swiftly for Mr. Munro again, but Mr. Munro had disappeared. Then he turned towards the sofa. Mrs. Munro, panting, was striving to lift up her sobbing child, and Mrs. Mulligan, unable to speak with rage, mouthed at Jack, and threatened him with uplifted oaken stick.

"D'you hear me, Kate?" he shouted, making a step towards her. "I want your promise. I won't lave till I get it. Out with it!"

"Out with him!" yelled Mr. Munro, stepping back into the crowd of bar drinkers, who were now falling from the doorway to let the Slogger loose into the smoke room.

The instant Jack faced round he received a terrific blow on the temple from the powerful fist of the ex-prizefighter. He was almost knocked over into the fireplace, but, recovering himself, rushed madly at his assailant, on whom he rained blows swift and furious. But to smite the face of the Slogger was like hitting a deal board. In a moment both men were struggling through the doorway, the shouting bar drinkers bearing hastily

back. Up through the hall, struggling and hitting, the two men staggered until they reached the front door, when the Slogger, who was deadly cool, deliberately drew back a pace and let drive his huge fist with such force and precision, that Jack Gallaher tumbled headlong down the steps into the arms of his friend, James Donohue. As soon as he recovered his balance, Jack faced about, blinded and bleeding, and would have rushed back up the steps again, but James—reinforced by Mr. Gallaher —held him fast and dragged and pushed him homeward.

They were followed by a string of excited persons from the Inn. It was too late for a crowd to gather, but the windows in the vicinity were flung up, and people shouted across to their neighbours:

"There's another row at the 'Horse an' Car'! Police!"

Meeting her son at the door, Mrs. Gallaher shrieked when the dull glare of the shop lamp disclosed his bruised and bloody face. They helped him in to the back parlour and made him lie down on the sofa where he collapsed in a semi-unconscious condition, whilst James Donohue unloosened his collar and tie, and Mr. Gallaher bathed his son's swollen face with a sponge soaked in vinegar and water.

"Oh, Jack, Jack, darlin', they've killed you!" shrieked Mrs. Gallaher, wringing her hands as she knelt at her son's side and gazed at his battered face. He tried to open his eyes, which were blackened and closing up.

"I'll marry her, mother," said he huskily, "to plaise you!"

"Oh, Jack, Jack, darlin', they've killed you!" she wailed, nursing his helpless head and kneading it between her palms.

"He'll be all right, ma'am," ventured James Donohue gently, "in a day or two. The Slogger nearly killed him."

"Oh, is it you, James?" said Mrs. Gallaher, looking up at him. "I didn't see you. But, sure, I dunno what I'm doin'. This is kind of you, James. Oh, my son, my son, my darlin' boy."

"He'll be aisier now," observed Mr. Gallaher, as he damped Jack's face and throat. "Don't worry him now. He's bad enough without that."

"To plaise mother," muttered Jack, between his swollen lips. His face was upturned and his eyes now completely closed.

"You'd betther come away, ma'am," suggested James, touching Mrs. Gallaher's arm. "It only disthresses him to know you're cryin' beside him."

She looked up through her tears at James, then rose, and James followed her out. She made a sudden rush for the front doorway, and halting a pace outside, shook both hands across towards the shining windows of the "Horse and Car."

"Murdherers!" she shrieked. "Oh, you black-hearted villains, you've murdhered my child!"

Again James Donohue, in his gentle, persuasive way, touched her arm and prevailed on her to go in.

"Betther go upstairs to bed, ma'am," said he. "You can't do any good at present. Misther Gallaher an' me we'll sit up with Jack to-night, an' plaise God he'll be all right in the mornin'."

"Oh, the cruel brutes!" moaned Mrs. Gallaher,

wringing her hands as she went towards the stairs. "To bate the child like that!"

"It was the Slogger done it," explained James Donohue, following her to the foot of the stairs. "No one else was fit to do it. Jack wanted Kate to promise to marry him, there an' then, an' they called in the Slogger."

Pausing half-way up the stairs, a hand on the bannisters, Mrs. Gallaher looked down at James Donohue.

"An' plaise God, in spite of thim, he'll marry her yet!" she exclaimed between her teeth.

"Plaise God he will, ma'am," assented James, with tears in his eyes. "An' I'll help him all I can!"

"I know you will, Jem. God love you!" returned Mrs. Gallaher, and she went painfully up the stairs whilst James Donohue, his heart throbbing with sympathy, turned into the back parlour to assist Mr. Gallaher.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. CASEY REJECTED.

JACK GALLAHER was better in the course of three or four days. He went about with a more serious manner and was unusually silent. His mother was alone one day in the parlour preparing his dinner when there came a tap at the half-open door, and Mr. Casey, doffing his tall hat, came in, and stood looking at her across the table.

"You do well, Misther Casey, to come in here," she said bitterly, "to gloat over me in the hour of my misfortune."

"Gloat over you, ma'am?" said Mr. Casey reproachfully. "My heart melts with sympathy for you."

"Much good that is to me now!" remarked Mrs. Gallaher, in the same tone as before. Curtailing her task of wiping the plates, she set them on a tray. "You could sit silent whin everyone was agin me. You had nothing to say then, with all your sympathy."

"What was the use?" protested Mr. Casey, looking around for a chair. "They were all dead agin you. Not, mind you, that they raley felt what they said. It's Mrs. Mulligan's doin'. That's the thrubble of the matter. The ould woman's

dead agin you, an' what she says they swear by now."

Resting her doubled hands on the table, Mrs. Gallaher—her face trembling as if to repress tears—watched him while he sat down, crossed his legs, and nursed his hat on his knees.

"An' what have I done or said aginst her?" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher with intense self-pity. "Didn't I always say the good word for her whin others were agin her—yourself the worst of all!"

Mr. Casey winced and softly stroked the top of his hat.

"I'm only the sarvint of the public, ma'am," he explained. "I must folla public opinion. I've none o' my own."

"What have I ivir done or said aginst any of thim," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher again, the tears rising to her eyes, "that they should turn upon me like that, an' tear me to pieces like a mad dog? What would Mrs. Munro have done only for the kindness I always showed her as a neighbour an' a woman with a feelin' heart?"

Solemnly shaking his head, Mr. Casey gazed sideways through the open window at the hens who were chucking and picking about the back-yard.

"That's true," he remarked. "All Carrigmore knows that you have bin the best frind she ever had—ay, an' whin there was no talk of money or the like. I know it too. But now all is changed. The Munros are surrounded by flat-therers, sycophants, an' human leeches. The glamour o' goold surrounds thim. It has turned thim into tigers full o' base ingratitude."

Sitting down helplessly, Mrs. Gallaher kneaded the dust cloth between her nervous hands.

"Why didn't you say all that," she asked, "whin they turned on me the other night, whin I stud alone without a frind to help me?"

"Sure I couldn't get in a word!" protested Mr. Casey, trying to look full at her, his eyes bright with admiration. "But I let thim have a piece of my mind whin you were gone. I tould thim what I thought of thim. But I'm in hope of changin' thim. I mane to get round the ould woman, an' if she doesn't sware by you within a week my name's not Tim Casey!"

"She's a bitther, bitther ould woman," moaned Mrs. Gallaher. "The few hard words I let fall in my haste she has threasured up, an' I could see in her face she'd like to put a knife in me."

"She'll nivir do that," said Mr. Casey confidently. "You've me on your side. I won't have this thing goin' on. It's too unnatheral. Thrust to me an' I'll have you an' her the best frinds in Carrigmore. You kin thrust t'me."

She had been gazing hopelessly on the floor at the crumbs under the table; but now she looked up at him, noting the extreme earnestness of his manner.

"But why d'you take such thrubble in the matther?" she asked.

"Kin you ask that question, ma'am?" he returned reproachfully. "Have you known me all these years without gauging the depth of my feelin's? Like seeks like; an' the clivirist man in Carrigmore —I don't mane to boast—natherally looks towards the clivirist an' hansumest woman. Why do I

take all this thrubble ? " he repeated more earnestly. " D'you call it thrubble whin it's dictated by a deep an' abidin' affection ? "

" But, what do you want me to do ? " asked Mrs. Gallaher.

" To fly with me ! " replied Mr. Casey, rising and extending his tall hat towards her.

" Fly with you—where ? " asked Mrs. Gallaher astonished.

" To the office of the *Flashlight* ! " exclaimed Mr. Casey, pressing the hat against his breast and staring over it with deep admiration. " There are a couple o' nice rooms over the printin' departmint that's at your disposil where we kin be as happy as the day is long. I've said it now," he added desperately, " an' I'd say the same before the whole world ! "

" I won't ask you to say it before the whole world," said Mrs. Gallaher rising—and he thought, at the moment, she had never looked more queenly and attractive—" but I'll ask you to say it before my husbind. I'll call him in. He's in the shop."

She had only two steps to make to the door, which she threw open, and called her husband's name. Turning white, Mr. Casey hurriedly put on his hat.

" That's the manest thing I ivir heard ! " said he. " I see now I've been wastin' years on a woman that doesn't desarve it. All right ! I'll make you sing another tune, my lady ! "

Rushing past her, as she stood with a hand on the open door, he almost ran into the arms of Mr. Gallaher, who had just come round the counter.

" What's the matther, Misther Casey ? " asked

Mr. Gallaher in mild surprise, looking down at the little man.

" You'll find that out," shouted Mr. Casey in a voice intended to reach Mrs. Gallaher, " whin you rade my next editorial ! "

Having uttered this threat, he thrust his hat to its furthest on the back of his head, stuck his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, and strutted from the shop.

About the centre of the open space he halted, and stood with folded arms, deep in cogitation, but sometimes looking cautiously back over his shoulder at Gallaher's Stores. From the open hallway of the " Horse and Car " came bursts of song, roars of laughter, and shouts of applause. Men were going up the steps in twos and threes; for Mr. Munro now kept open house free of charge and all were welcome. Around the steps were gathered a crowd of the humbler townsfolk hopeful of getting a glimpse of Mrs. Mulligan, of whose fortune fabulous stories were in circulation. Having apparently made up his mind to a course of action, Mr. Casey, still with arms folded and determined brows, slowly walked towards the Inn. Ignoring the greetings of some acquaintances, he entered the hall, and turned into the smoke room, where, as he expected, he found the proprietor alone. Mr. Munro had now donned a highly coloured smoking cap, with long yellow tassels, and wore a heavy gold watch-chain across his waistcoat with five or six glittering rings on his fingers. He was reclining in an easy chair with a long tumbler of liquor on the floor within easy reach; his slippered feet elevated to the mantelpiece.

" Kin I close the door ? " asked Mr. Casey as he entered.

" The voice of Timothy ! " exclaimed Mr. Munro, without looking round. " The very man I wanted to see. Timothy, close the door an' open your mouth. There's lashin's an' lavin's on the sideboord." Then, recollecting his English accent, added : " What do you think of Mexican Reels ? "

" There's such a power o' nise from the bar," remarked Mr. Casey, having closed the door, " that it's impossible to hear oneself spake."

He went to the sideboard, where he proceeded with deliberation to select his refreshments. Mr. Munro slowly puffed curls of smoke from his cigar, his eyes watering in his flushed face while his unmeaning smile grew broader with contentment. He talked of Mexican Rails and financial problems ; but Mr. Casey, seated at the table and deep in his own reflections, paid no attention.

" I want a plain word with you, John Munro," he observed after a while, " an' no prevarication or batin' about the bush. Take your feet down, an' turn round an' listen to me awhile."

With genial alacrity, Mr. Munro wheeled his chair about until he sat with his back to the bell-rope—which hung beside the fireplace—and his face to the gloomy guest.

" Your word here's law, Tim," said he.

" Ay," returned Mr. Casey, rubbing the ashes off his cigar against the rim of the table, and blowing the fire red into the tobacco. " That's all very fine, an' I'm willin' to take it in good spirit. But what I want to ask you is this—why did you desave me ? "

Mr. Munro's smile broadened as he took the cigar from his lips, to stare incredulously at his friend.

" Desave you, Tim ? " he repeated. " How so ? "

Mr. Casey tapped his clenched hand on the table close to the decanter.

" You tould me some made-up story about havin' made a few pounds," he explained. " An' you made me a present of ten pounds for my wounded feelin's."

" So I did," remarked Mr. Munro, nodding. " I had forgotten it. It was far too little."

" You're right there, Johnnie Munro," said Mr. Casey somewhat sternly. " For a man who is likely to fall in for millions, ten pounds is a baggatelle. That's by the way. What I want to know is : why didn't you tell me all the truth ? "

Bending forward, his hands grasping the chair, Mr. Munro slowly winked his right eye.

" Because, my son," he replied, " the time wasn't ripe. You're an editor, an' why should I tell you what I wasn't allowed to spake about ? It would be published praymature to the world. My mouth was shut. But, I did my best undher the circumstances. Now, all the world knows it. It's not my fault. Whoiver let it out it wasn't me, for I'm a man of honour and a gentleman."

" Then, it's thrue ? " said Mr. Casey, with startling suddenness, his clear glare fixing the other's unsteady eyes.

Both men looked hard for a moment at one another ; then Mr. Munro, rising, held out his hand, and Mr. Casey grasping it, looked up expectantly at him.

"Thrue as gospil!" said Mr. Munro, in a hoarse whisper.

"Be japers," exclaimed Mr. Casey, dropping his friend's hand and putting his own to his brow, "it's hard to belave. Are you sure," he asked, with a return to former seriousness, "that it's not all a hoax? Maybe this ould English chap is havin' a joke at your expinse?"

"Do I look like a fool, Tim Casey?" asked Mr. Munro indignantly.

"Sometimes you do," replied Mr. Casey.

"Thank you, Timothy, thank you!" returned Mr. Munro heartily. "But I'm not such a fool as I look."

"Well, then, what proof have you," demanded his companion, "that you are not being made a fool of?"

Coming round the corner of the table, Mr. Munro bent down to whisper in the other's ear:

"Because, wheniver Misther Pepper goes out, I go up to his room an' rade all his letthers."

Then, straightening himself, he burst into a cackle of laughter at his own cleverness, rubbed his hands, slapped the editorial shoulder, and returned, still chuckling, to his chair. Stretching down for his tumbler, he raised it high.

"Your health, Editorial Tim!" he exclaimed.

"Slanthé!" returned Mr. Casey raising his own.

Someone now tried the door and opened it. A young man thrust in a sodden face.

"Privit!" shouted Mr. Munro starting up. "Privit!"

The young man disappeared, leaving the door

ajar, and the singing and roaring of the crowd at the bar burst through. Rising with an air of stern dignity, Mr. Munro closed the door, locked it, and resumed his seat.

" Then," remarked Mr. Casey, who had been deep in thought, " Mrs. Mulligan's a millionaire ? "

" Such, sir," returned Mr. Munro, " are the facts of the case."

" An' your wife's next heir-at-law ? " observed Mr. Casey pointedly.

Mr. Munro nodded contentedly.

" I'm dhrivin' at something," remarked Mr. Casey after a pause.

" What are you dhriving at ? " asked Mr. Munro stupidly ; he was feeling rather sleepy.

Mr. Casey drew his chair round until his foot touched Mr. Munro's slipper.

" I'm driving at this," he explained. " Lis'en now. If Mrs. Mulligan was dead your wife would have all the money to herself ? "

Mr. Munro considered a moment, then stared at his friend, who repeated his remarks, but more slowly and significantly. Then Mr. Munro looked all round the room and at the closed door.

" Mrs. Mulligan," said he, in an undertone, " won't live long."

" How the divil d'you know that ? " retorted Mr. Casey. " She may live long enough to see you an' your wife an' daughter down. She's ould, but she's as hard as nails. She's bin battherin' about all her life on high-roads an' ditches. Won't live long ? Them ould divils see many younger ones down. That's the pint I'm drivin' at."

Sitting back, Mr. Munro smoked harder and got

weaker about the eyes, until, finally, he threw the cigar into the grate, folded his arms, crossed his legs, and stared fixedly at Mr. Casey's mysterious face.

"If Mrs. Mulligan was gone," observed Mr. Casey, as if pressing his point; then he paused, adding: "There y'are! Have you ever thought of that?" and waited for the other to speak.

"It has all come so sudden," explained Mr. Munro helplessly, "an' my head has bin in such a whirl that, bedad, it nivir enthered my mind. But see what it is to have a frind with a great brain! You're a wondherful man, Tim, a wondherful man!"

"Don't mind what I am," remarked Mr. Casey with affected modesty. "Concenthrate your thoughts on this problim"—bending forward, he laid a hand on the other's knee. "If the ould woman was out of the way—an' she'd be a good riddance—there y'are!"

Regretfully Mr. Munro shook his head.

"It's a terrible thing to be hanged," said he.

Mr. Casey sat indignantly upright.

"What are you talkin' of?" he exclaimed. "What sort of fool are you at all, at all? How dar' you make such an insinuation? What I mane," he explained more mildly, "is, that in case the windas of the ould woman's room were left open, she might ketch a bad cowld that ud get on her chest an' settle her; or, maybe," he added reflectively, "she might slip on the stairs in the dark an' fall down an' brake her ould yalla neck. There are severil ways she might come suddenly to her ind an' the divil mend her!"

"Aymin," responded Mr. Munro, fervently. "She's a bitther ould ashplant whin all is said an' done."

"But what I say to you," observed Mr. Casey cautiously, "is betwane man an' man."

"It goes no farther," assented Mr. Munro, extending a hand, which Mr. Casey held a moment and then dropped.

There ensued a long silence, during which Mr. Munro showed signs of slumber. After a life of abstinence he had suddenly developed a reckless taste for dissipation and was easily overcome. As he lay back, his eyes slowly closing and opening, the unlit cigar slipped through his fingers unheeded.

"But there's another pint I wish to impress on you," observed Mr. Casey, who was wide awake, and now kicked his friend's nearest foot. "Has she made her will yet?"

Mr. Munro raised his heavy eyelids.

"Wha—what's the matther?" he asked thickly.

Bending angrily towards him, Mr. Casey thrust a forefinger into his knee.

"Has Mrs. Mulligan made a will?" he asked sharply.

"I dunno," replied Mr. Munro. "I don't think so."

"Then get her to do so as soon as you can," suggested Mr. Casey, putting back a hand to feel for his tumbler.

"Why?" asked Mr. Munro in so stupid a voice that Mr. Casey frowned heavily at him over his drink.

"Because," he explained, "if she dies intestate where will all the millions go to?"

Mr. Munro was now a little more awake. He helped himself to sit up, but the effort exhausted him and he lay back again.

"Mrs. Munro's her only relation," said he surlily.

"Don't be too sure of that, Johnnie Munro," remarked Mr. Casey sternly. "If the ould woman dies intestate you'll find plinty of people cropping up all over the country—ay, and in America, too—to claim a relationship. And, mind you, you'd have to fight ivry case in the law courts. Don't make any mistake, Johnnie Munro. Get the will made as soon as possible."

"Right!" grunted Mr. Munro.

"An' get my name put in it," suggested Mr. Casey.

"Right," said his friend.

Mr. Casey said no more. Mr. Munro remained bleering cunningly at him, until his eyelids began to close, open and close again, and, in a short while, he was lying with head back, his mouth open, snoring. Mr. Casey studied him as he lay; then stole away on tiptoe, unlocked the door, passed silently through the noisy crowd at the bar, went upstairs and rapped at Mrs. Mulligan's door.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN SEARCH OF MATRIMONY.

"COME in!" said the harsh voice of Mrs. Mulligan, and, Mr. Casey entering, closed the door behind him.

Taking off his hat, he bowed to the old woman. She was seated in her favourite place on the step ladder. Then he glanced about with surprise. The old lumber room was furnished with four chairs, a sofa, table, and cabinet; pictures were on the walls and the floor was covered with oilcloth.

"God save you, ma'am," said Mr. Casey.

"Arra, is that yourself, Misther Casey?" returned the old woman, with a genial nod. "Sure, you're heartily welkim."

"You must be lonely in here, ma'am," suggested Mr. Casey, regarding her with deep sympathy.

"The divil a bit!" returned Mrs. Mulligan, searching in her bosom for the black clay pipe. "It's whin I'm with people I'm lonely. I'm nivir lonely whin I'm by myself."

"Is that a hint to me?" asked Mr. Casey, smiling over his tall hat, which he held against his breast.

"Don't take it like that," said Mrs. Mulligan,

preparing to cut a lump of hard tobacco with a jack-knife. "It's a great honour you do me, intirely."

"The honour is all the other way," observed Mr. Casey. "I have bin thinkin' very much about you lately."

"About me?" said the old woman, looking from her work.

"And about myself, too," said Mr. Casey softly; coming towards the ladder he placed a chair for himself, sat down with his hat on his knees, and looked up at her. "I see a great likeness between your life an' mine. I see, too, that what you want most is purtection."

"Sure, I'm very well able to mind myself, Misther Casey," returned Mrs. Mulligan, shutting up the knife and stuffing the tobacco into the pipe. "It ud be a quare thing if I couldn't mind myself at this time o' day."

"Ay, but there is danger round you that you want to be purtected from," observed Mr. Casey, mysteriously.

She stopped pressing the tobacco to look down at him, peering from her deep-set eyes.

"An' what might it be?" she asked.

"Danger," explained Mr. Casey more mysteriously, "from them that you thrust most; from them that are nearest to you in blood an' ought to be the first to purtect you. Now, I mention no names an' I make no charges," he continued warmly, "but I know what I know, an' I can't stand by an' see plots hatched aginst the life of an innicint woman; an' I have said to myself: 'Purtect this woman!'"

"An' how d'you mane to purtect me?" asked Mrs. Mulligan.

"By marryin' you!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, rising firmly to his feet and extending his hat towards her. "I could then purtect you from all harm, secret or open, by the saycrid right of husbind!"

"Is it the hundhred pound you're afther, Misther Casey?" asked the old woman, quietly lighting a match by rubbing it against the wall.

Coming closer to the ladder, Mr. Casey extended his hand.

"Give me your hand," said he impressively.

"For what?" inquired Mrs. Mulligan suspiciously. "What's the raisin so many people want to hould my hand lately? Is there anything wrong with it?"

"No, thank God!" said Mr. Casey fervently. "It may not be as young an' tindher as in the days of yore, but it is the hand of an honist woman. D'you think I'd desave you?"

"I don't think about the matther at all," returned Mrs. Mulligan, composedly. "But I think your stummick's out of ordher."

"Lis'en t'me," observed Mr. Casey. "What d'you mane by a hundhred pounds?"

"The legacy my cousin Mike has left me in America," she replied, smoking, with her chin on her hands and her stick across her knees.

Raising his eyebrows, Mr. Casey looked into his hat and coughed.

"I wouldn't touch a penny of it," said he, gazing at her again. "D'you hear that, ma'am? Come to the office of the *Flashlight* in the honoured

capacity of Mrs. Tim Casey, an' you may keep every penny of your money."

Mrs. Mulligan's pipe had gone out, and, having searched in vain for a match through her pockets, she descended and lit her pipe by holding it bowl downwards over the lamp. When she was about to return to the step-ladder again, he gently detained her, and, putting her hand through his arm, smiled down at her and walked her slowly up and down the room.

"We are not so ill-matched," said he, "as you imagine. You are now promenadin' with the editor of the *Carrigmore Flashlight*."

"It's a great honour," remarked the old woman, feeling her way round the floor with her stick. "But you're a quare man, an' I couldn't live with a quare man."

"Jooks an' countesses smile upon us," observed Mr. Casey, as he walked her round the oilcloth and took off his hat to an imaginary audience. "They say, if there is chivalry on my part there is wisdom an' sedateness on yours. Put out that infernal pipe, ma'am!"

"The divil a bit o' me!" said Mrs. Mulligan, pulling her hand from his arm and sitting down on the sofa. "It's *Flashlight* an' jooks an' the divil knows what t'me!"

There was an air of hesitation in Mr. Casey's manner as he stood before her. At first he looked significantly from her to the vacant patch of sofa beside her, but the rank fumes of the tobacco were pervading the room; and, putting a hand to his forehead, he turned pale. For a moment or two he strove to speak, then tottered weakly to the door,

and, staggering out to the landing, forced up the window and thrust his head out to the cool night air.

"Arra, who's this?" exclaimed a fresh voice presently; and, drawing in his head, Mr. Casey saw Kate Munro pausing beside him before entering her grand-aunt's sitting-room.

"For God's sake," gasped Mr. Casey, leaning up against the wall, "a dhrop o' wather, quick!"

"A dhrink o' wather, Misther Casey!" exclaimed Kate amazed. "Oh, you must be very, very sick!"

Hastening into the room, she poured out a tumbler of water from a decanter and Mr. Casey drank it greedily. Then having drawn in a long breath, he took her hand.

"Is the door closed?" he asked, looking over her shoulder.

Kate glanced back and saw a faint gleam of lamplight shooting through.

"I'll shut it," said she.

When she returned to him, Mr. Casey groped about for her hand.

"If it was mine," said he, "to call my own. If I thought I might have the saycrid right of purtectin' you. If I thought——"

"Are you there, Kate?" cried Mrs. Mulligan, from within.

"I must go," said Kate, releasing her hand from Mr. Casey's emphatic grasp. "You ought to go downstairs an' lie down a bit, Misther Casey, an' you'll get betther."

Entering the room, she closed the door behind her and Mr. Casey was left alone. Thrusting his

head through the window again, he saw the glitter of the moon on the stable roofs and the sweet aroma of new-mown hay was wafted towards him. Presently he heard the clank of a bucket on the cobbled stones, and saw the burly figure of a man, carrying a lantern, across the yard.

"Hullo!" said Mr. Casey, in a weak voice.

The man in the yard turned and looked up towards the window.

"What d'you want?" he shouted.

"Is that you, dog?" exclaimed Mr. Casey, recognizing the voice of the hated Slogger. "Send me up some hay!"

"Be japers! I'll give you somethin' sthronger than that!" roared the stableman furiously. "Whoever y'are!"

Laying down his lantern, he headed swiftly for the back entrance, and Mr. Casey as swiftly turned on the landing and made rapidly down the stairs.

Pressing his way through the throng at the bar, he paused a moment to look in at the coffee room, which was thronged with persons of both sexes dancing to the strains of a wheezing fiddle; then hastening across to the smoke room, entered and slammed the door behind him. The sudden noise awoke Mr. Munro, who sat up, rubbing his eyes. He smiled faintly as he recognized his friend.

"I'll do it, Tim!" said he, as if he had been thinking over the matter. "Or I'll get someone to get rid of her."

"What are you talkin' of?" asked Mr. Casey, preparing to sit down in his former chair.

Winking heavily, Mr. Munro jerked his thumb upward as if to indicate Mrs. Mulligan's location.

"The ould one," he explained.

"An' how?" inquired Mr. Casey, pulling up his coat tails before seating himself.

"By buttherin' the stairs, as you said," replied Mr. Munro.

He was stretching down as he spoke for the tumbler on the hearthrug, when Mr. Casey, with a cry of rage, flung himself on the Innkeeper, whom he caught by the throat and shook.

"Ijit!" cried Mr. Casey. "Are you mad? What did I tell you to do? I tould you to do nothin'! I only spoke of accidents that might happen. D'you hear me, Johnnie Munro? Accidents!"

He released Mr. Munro, who was already purple from strangulation.

"An' I tell you," exclaimed Mr. Casey, falling back a step and shaking a threatening fist at him, "you're not to let the ould woman go. Doesn't Pepper want to take her to London?"

"Next Monday," gasped Mr. Munro, feeling his throat.

"Don't let her go a fut beyond this house!" said Mr. Casey in the same tone. "You'll nivir see her agin if you do. D'you mind me? Don't be a fool. Do what I tell you."

Before Mr. Munro could reply, the door was burst in and the enraged Slogger rushed in, his right fist aloft.

"Where's the man that wants hay?" he shouted furiously.

Turning round, Mr. Casey drew himself up and stared indignantly at the intruder.

"How dar' you, sir," he exclaimed, "how dar'

you intherrupt our privit conversation? Begone, sir!"

"There was someone wantin' hay," blurted the Slogger, rolling his reddened eye. "Who is he? Where is he?"

"How dar' you, sir? Begone!" repeated Mr. Casey, with increased dignity, and the Slogger, awed by his manner, went away to pursue his inquiries elsewhere. He had, indeed, been already up the stairs as far as the landing and down to the kitchen. In the meanwhile, Jack Gallaher, who had been searching for Kate, having discovered that she was with Mrs. Mulligan raced up the stairs, three steps at a time, and knocked at the old woman's door. Kate herself came out, and he caught her instantly by both hands.

"It's me, Kate," said he. "Don't be frightened."

"What d'you want, Jack?" she asked, trembling with apprehension.

"I want your promise, Kate!" he exclaimed, his grasp tightening. "There's only one girl I'll marry, an' that's yourself. I've sworn to do it an' I'll kape my oath if it leads me to the gallows. Out with it now, Kate. Will you have me?"

"But you don't raley care for me," said Kate, casting down her eyes and trembling still more violently at his passionate appeal.

"Would I ask you to marry me, if I didn't?" protested Jack evasively. "I'll be a good husbind to you, Kate. Don't you believe that?"

"I'm sure you would, Jack," faltered Kate sobbingly.

"Then give me your promise. Say you will!" persisted Jack, drawing her closer.

"Let the girl go!" screamed Mrs. Mulligan, whose short, sturdy figure, illumined by the lamplight behind, now darkened the doorway. As she spoke she held her stick high. "Let that dacint girl go, you rowdy ruffian!"

The old woman dragged at Kate's dress and Jack Gallaher, unwilling to use violence, let the girl go. Instantly Mrs. Mulligan pulled her into the room and slammed the door in Jack's face. He turned aside to the open window and gazed down at the shining slates of the stable roofs.

"Are you the man that wants hay?" roared a voice behind him, and next moment, as he turned, he was caught by the throat and hurled down the stairs.

He was carried, in a senseless condition, across to his father's stores; and the dancers, who had crowded out to see him pass through the hall, hastened back to their merriment. His mother met the young men and their burden, and after one glance at her son's white face—all the whiter in the clear moonlight—she rushed half-way towards the Inn and shook her hands aloft in impotent rage.

"You murdherin' villains!" she shrieked. "My black curse on you all! On ivry one that has the name of Munro!"

She was dragged back by her husband, and they returned to find Jack stretched once more on the sofa in the back parlour.

CHAPTER XV.

JACK GALLAHER'S RESOLVE.

AN hour later James Donohue, having called at the "Horse and Car," and heard the news, immediately went across to the Stores. In the doorway he saw Mr. Gallaher bareheaded.

"Is that Jem I see?" asked Mr. Gallaher, as the young man approached.

"It's me right enough, sir," replied James. "What's all this about Jack? How is he?"

"That's just the very thing I want to talk to you about," observed Mr. Gallaher gravely. "He says he won't have a docthor. But I think he wants one. An' that's where we differ. How did it happen, Jem?"

"I don't think anyone knows rightly," answered James. "I heard someone say the Slogger threw him downstairs. But, of coorse, with all the confusion an' noise an' divilmint that's goin' on over there it's hard to know what to belave an' what not to belave."

"You'd betther come in an' have a look at him, anyhow," suggested Mr. Gallaher mournfully. "The poor boy'll be glad to see you. A quieter or betther lad doesn't walk the sthreets of Carrigmore;

but somehow, of late, he always sames to be gettin' into thrubble of one kind or another. Come in, anyhow."

"Troth, I will an' welkim!" returned James.

He turned into the narrow hallway, dimly lighted by the old swinging paraffin lamp in the shop, and followed Mr. Gallaher softly into the back parlour.

"Here's Jem," observed Mr. Gallaher, as he entered.

Looking towards the sofa, James saw Jack sitting up with a big pillow behind him. On a chair beside him were towels and a basin of hot water. Mrs. Gallaher, who was seated at the end of the sofa, stood up when the others entered.

"What d'you think now of your friends the Munros?" she asked James, with intense bitterness, at the same time pointing at her son. "See the wreck they've made of my boy!"

"It's terrible intirely," said James, as he advanced open-eyed towards his friend. "Well, Jack, my bould son, how d'you fale?"

At this cheery salute, Jack held out a weak hand and smiled.

"I'm all right, Jem," said he. "But that one-eyed divil gev me a bad shakin'. I'll be right as the mail to-morra!"

"Maybe you'd betther take my advice now," suggested Mr. Gallaher, closing over the door, "an' let me fetch the docthor."

"The divil a docthor I'll see!" returned Jack. "I tould you that before. He'd only make me belave I was worse than I am. I've nothin' but a bad pain in the top o' my head."

As he lay back on the pillow, his eyes turned steadfastly towards James Donohue.

"Ay," remarked his mother bitterly, "your father's a great hand at advice whin it's too late. This ud nivir have happened if he hadn't thrown cowld wather on my plans from the first. I hope he's satisfied now!"

"D'you hear that, Jem?" observed Mr. Gallaher, with an heroic attempt at pleasantry. "I'm always the black shape. If the day o' judgmint kem to-morra it ud be all my fault!"

Without awaiting a rejoinder, he quietly backed out of the room.

"Never you mind, mother," said Jack, turning his eyes on her. "I'll marry Kate Munro all right. You lave it to me."

"Oh, no!" said his mother piteously. "Betther lave her alone now, Jack. They'll only kill you in the long run."

"Sorra a kill!" said Jack, attempting a smile. "It's a lot o' killin' I'd take. You let your mind be aisy, mother. I know how to manage it. Jem here'll help me. Won't you, Jem?"

"That I will, Jack!" exclaimed James, heartily.

"Well, I'll lave you now for the prisint," said Mrs. Gallaher sighing, as she moved towards the door; and turning back to add: "Don't talk too much to him, James avic. He's not able for it. I'll just go up an' make his bed. The sooner he gets into it the betther."

When she had gone, James Donohue took the seat she had vacated at the end of the sofa, and gazed with profound sympathy at his battered friend.

"They're goin' to the divil intirely over there,"

he remarked, "what with free dhrinkin' an' dancin' an' the divil knows what."

"Is mother gone, Jem?" asked Jack, who was lying back, looking up at the ceiling.

"Ay, she's just gone," replied James Donohue.

Jack slowly sat up.

"Well, Jem," said he, "you heard what I said to her?"

"I did," said his friend.

"At first," observed Jack, "I didn't care for this business at all. Now that I see they're detarmined to baulk me in every way I've made up my mind to marry Kate Munro or die for it. D'you hear that, Jem?"

"I hear that, Jack," returned Donohue, "an' I know you well enough. You'll kape your word."

"Thrust me for that," said Jack. "Now, bad as my head is, I've bin thinkin' out a schame. I know Kate, an' if she gives a promise she'll keep it. They'll set a watch for me over there, but as soon as I'm betther, I'll get in there by hook or crook, an' I'll let you know the day; because I want you to keep the Slogger away—set him dhrunk or get him out to the stables while I talk to Kate. Will you do that, Jem?"

"There's my hand, Jack," observed James Donohue. "I'll do that an' more. You've only to ask me."

"I know that," said Jack, feebly shaking James's hand. "I can't talk much now," he added, lying back with a groan. "But you might dhrop in an' see me to-morra, if you've time."

James Donohue rose.

"Bedad, I will, Jack," said he; "an' now, you

have a good slape to-night. There's nothin' like slape. Good-night an' God bless you ! "

" Good-night, Jem."

James Donohue went out, and in the street doorway he found Mr. Gallaher staring gloomily towards the shining windows of the " Horse and Car."

" Good-night, Misther Gallaher," observed James, holding out his hand.

" James," said Mr. Gallaher, as he mechanically took the young man's hand, " you heard what Mrs. Gallaher said t'me ? "

" I did," replied James Donohue, " an' I thought, maybe, it was undesarved."

" It was not," returned Mr. Gallaher, with an emphasis that made James start. " I desarve it all an' more. I know now what a clivir woman she is, an' what a blitherin' ijit I've bin. But I was always like that," he added, remorsefully.

" Ah, well," remarked James, not knowing what to say, " I suppose we all make mistakes, sir. It'll be all right soon in the long run."

Mr. Gallaher looked meditatively at the shadows of the dancers constantly flitting across the plate-glass window, and he seemed to listen awhile to the shrill music of the fiddle.

" To think o' the luck of some people," said he bitterly. " Who'd ivir have thought that Johnnie Munro would have fallen in for cartloads o' money like that ! What's the use o' prachin' about bein' honist an' industhrious, whin a scraneen like that kin dhrive about in his own murdher cars an' sail about in his own yacht an' have sarvints galore to wait on him ! It's enough to sicken a dog ! "

" It's a pure matther o' luck, sir," observed

James Donohue soothingly. "It's through no merit of his. I'll just go across now an' see how matthers are goin', for I want to help Jack as far as I can."

"Do, an' God bless you!" said Mr. Gallaher; then in a sudden access of rage as James was about to depart: "An' tell Johnnie Munro if he dar' touch a hair on my child's head agin he'll have to answer to me! D'you mind that, Jem?"

James Donohue, who had gone several paces, returned and listened respectfully.

"I will, sir," he replied.

"The quiet man," said Mr. Gallaher heatedly, "is the most dangerous whin roused. I'll be dangerous whin I'm roused, for I'm a quiet man. Tell him that, too."

"I will, sir," observed James; adding hastily, "Good-night, sir."

Mr. Gallaher made no reply, but remained staring wrathfully across at the Inn, his hands clenched at his sides.

When James Donohue re-entered the "Horse and Car" he found the hall full of amorous couples and the coffee room still crowded with excited dancers. Turning to the right, he entered the smoke room, where he found Mr. Munro and Mr. Casey, the latter seated at the table with folded arms, his tall hat beside him.

"Close those doors, James," cried Mr. Munro, whose face was flushed, "an come over here, James, an' make yourself at home. What d'you think of the Gulf of Mexico?"

"The Gulf of Mexico?" repeated James, as he seated himself.

"I repate the word if necessity demands it," said Mr. Munro, smiling and nodding at Mr. Casey's serious face. "What would you say to a bungalow on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, with an eye to Mexican Rails an' your own yacht floatin' over the deep, blue say?"

"Don't be boastin', don't be boastin'!" suggested Mr. Casey sternly, as he lifted his tumbler. "Misther Donohue doesn't know what you're dhrivin' at."

"I do not," remarked James candidly.

"We want to get Katie married," observed Mr. Munro, nodding hilariously at James. "I won't mention names or a name, but there are many competitors. Ay, faith. We won't mention names. Will we, Editorial?"

"You're blatherin' a lot," said Mr. Casey, "an' you ought to be gettin' to bed an' shuttin' up the place. There's too much dhrinkin' an' tomfoolery goin' on here altogether. It's not rispictible. It's more like Bedlam than anythin' else."

Bursting into a loud laugh Mr. Munro slapped his knees.

"Laugh an' be happy!" he exclaimed. "No more pinchin' an' savin'. That's my motto now. Hurroo!"

"Well, I'm goin' to kape rispictable hours, anyhow," remarked Mr. Casey, rising with dignity. "I've to work for my bread an' butther, not being a millionaire."

"I'll be part of the way with you, Misther Casey," observed James, getting up.

Mr. Munro rose too, but unsteadily, and laughed in a vacant manner as he shook hands.

When James Donohue turned towards the door, the Innkeeper slapped him on the shoulder and whispered, "What d'you think o' Kate?" But the effort caused him to stumble back into his chair where he sat smiling inanely as the others went out.

Through the thronged hallway Mr. Casey pushed his way, James Donohue closely following, until they reached the open. Half-way between the Inn and Gallaher's Stores, Mr. Casey took James Donohue by the arm and halted.

"Over there," said he, pointing to the Stores, which were now shuttered and dark, "lives a woman that I loved as no man ivir loved. But love sometimes turns to hate, an' whin you rade my latest editorial you'll find out what I think of her."

After this confidential remark, he walked on down the street, James beside him. But before they lost sight of the last gleam from the windows of the "Horse and Car" Mr. Casey wheeled his companion round and pointed back towards the Inn.

"But there," he observed, "lives the new star of my destiny. There I, Timothy Casey, will sacrifice myself on the althar of mammon. Why not? What's jaynius, afther all, without money? Money's everything. Money's now my god."

"Well, I wouldn't go so far as that," remarked James deferentially.

"Because you are young," said Mr. Casey. "But don't sneer at bungalows or yachts or palaces. The time may come whin you'll want thim. As for Johnnie Munro, God nivir made a bigger ijit, an'

thank God he's dhrinkin' himself to death as fast as a racehorse. Here's the office of the *Flashlight*," for they had walked on. "Good-night, James. I won't ask you in, as the hour is late."

James Donohue went pensively home and got into bed. He dreamed that he was lying in a hammock on the sunny shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and awoke to find the rain swooping against the window.

CHAPTER XVI.

A MORAL LECTURE.

MRS. MULLIGAN sat on the top rung of her ladder, her back to the attic bedroom, her face in her hands. She was smoking reflectively.

"I can't make it out at all," she observed to Kate, who was on a chair with head bent, sewing. "What's the manin' of it all?"

"What's the manin' of what, gran'-aunt?" asked Kate without looking up.

"The fuss they're all makin' about me," explained Mrs. Mulligan. "The goin's on. Sure, it's thinkin' I am there must be more nor a hundhred pounds in it."

"In what, gran'-aunt?" inquired Kate, crossing her knees and biting at the end of the thread.

"What the man in America left me," replied Mrs. Mulligan. "There's more nor a hundhred pounds in it, Kate."

"Maybe there's two hundhred," suggested Kate.

"What 'ud you say to five hundhred?" asked Mrs. Mulligan with a cunning look.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised," returned Kate, sitting back to push the thread through the needle.

"Thim an' their deppitations," remarked Mrs. Mulligan. "An' your father goin' to call the place the 'Mulligan Arms.' I'm thinkin' the 'Mulligan Legs' ud be betther considherin' what an ould thramp I am. Be the same token this life doesn't suit me at all."

"You'll get used to it," said Kate, resuming her stitching.

"The divil a bit!" returned the old woman. "I've had more pains in my back since I kem here than I ivir had in twinty years. It's too hard a life for me, an' I'd nivir settle down to it. There's nothin' to bate the open air an' the roads an' go where you like. That's the life for me, an' I nivir suffer pain or ache. But, I'm thinkin', if I cud have enough to ate an' dhrink an' a bit of tibacca—an' it's not much I want—I'd give the rest to you, alannah, if you'd settle down an' git married."

"I'm to settle down and you're to wandher about?" suggested Kate. "No; I don't want to get married, gran'-aunt."

"Arra, go on with you," returned Mrs. Mulligan. "Lave it to an ould woman like me to know the signs an' tokins. Sure, child o' Grace, it's only natheral. You nadent be ashamed of it. The bist in the world git married. An' what I'm thinkin' now, Kate, considherin' the power o' money you'd have, is, you'd want a careful man to look afther it. None o' your harum-scarum, divil-may-care chaps like Jack Gallaher beyant—but a sinsible man like Misther Pepper himself."

Sitting upright, Kate stared with indignant face at the old woman who was blinking and nodding solemnly at her.

"Misther Pepper!" she exclaimed. "Faith, I'd look well, givin' myself to a man that might be my father. I'm not so hard up as that!"

"You couldn't have a wiser or betther man," said Mrs. Mulligan decisively, "to look afther your money. I kin see it in his face. An' as for his bein' ould enough to be your father, he's not that. A young man 'ud make your money fly as fast as he could handle it, an' where would you be thin? You can't get a man in America to die ivry time you want a fortune. You kin have the money an' welkim. I don't want it. It only brings me thrubble an a lot o' false frinds that make love to me before my face an' shake their fists behind my back. Sure, I know thim well. They nadent thry to desave me. There's not one o' thim barrin' yourself, maybe, cares a thraneen about me."

"Perhaps you nivir thried to make anyone care for you?" suggested Kate.

"Maybe not. It's too much thrubble anyhow," said Mrs. Mulligan. "An' I'm too ould now to begin. Wirra, but this life doesn't suit me at all. I think I'll be off soon agin on my thravels."

Taking the pipe from her lips she burst forth in shrill quaver:

> "I built a house with care an' there
> Care long with me did fare O."

She was interrupted by a knock at the door, and, on Kate's invitation, Mr. James Donohue came in. He entered boldly enough, but the moment he saw Kate he became confused.

"Musha, an' is that yourself!" exclaimed Mrs. Mulligan with a broad smile. "Misther Donohue,

my bowld son! It's rale glad I am to see your dacint, kind face."

"Misther Casey," observed James, gazing indistinctly over Kate's bent head, "wants to know, ma'am, if you'll come down to the smoke room, for Misther Pepper wants to spake to you."

"Don't you see Kate there?" asked Mrs. Mulligan. "Isn't that a fine, bloomin', han'some girl for you!"

He made no reply, but gazed steadfastly at his boots. Kate gathered up her work.

"Wirra, but it's the quare man y'are!" exclaimed the old woman. "Why don't you go over an' put your arm round her an' give her a kiss?"

"Gran'-aunt," observed Kate quietly, "you'd betther go downstairs an' not keep Misther Pepper waitin'."

"Sure, I sippose I had. He's a terrible man. So, Misther Donohue, you don't think Kate good enough for you?"

She was talking in this way as she descended the ladder. As she made towards him with her stick stamping the floor, he opened the door wider and stood with his back to the wall.

"She's far too good for the like's o' me, ma'am," he remarked in a low voice to the old woman.

"In troth," she returned, pausing before him, "I don't agree with you. You're a rale, good boy, an' she'll nivir get betther. Come, Kate, alannah, an' help me to talk with Misther Pepper."

Putting her work aside, Kate stood up to assist her grand-aunt down the stairs. As she passed out James Donohue flushed hotly and once again attentively studied his boots.

Downstairs they found Mr. Pepper walking about, his hands in his pockets. Mr. Casey, with Mrs. and Mr. Munro were also present.

" Well, Mrs. Mulligan," observed Mr. Pepper, " I think this will probably be my last appeal to you. I want to know definitely, not to an hour, but certainly to a day, when you will come to London ? "

Before replying, Mrs. Mulligan sat down laboriously—aided by Kate—on the sofa, and having looked round on all, gazed fixedly at Mr. Pepper's impatient face.

" You want to know whin I'm going to London, sir ? " said she.

" Exactly," he replied. " For the twentieth time. I cannot afford any more time. You must make up your mind now, and at once."

They all waited for an answer, but, for some moments Mrs. Mulligan, her chin resting on the hands folded on the top of her stick, seemed plunged in reflection.

" Well, sir," said she, " I may as well be candid with you. Before I go away from the ould counthry I want to see this slip of a girl here married an' done for."

Mr. Pepper shook his head.

" Unless you have the bridegroom ready and the marriage prepared for an extremely early date," he returned, " I could not positively guarantee to wait."

" I nivir could see the use of doin' things in a hurry," said Mrs. Mulligan. " But since you're in such a tarin' hurry, will you marry the girl yourself ? "

Before Mr. Pepper could reply, Kate, who had

been kneeling in front of her grand-aunt, rose and walked from the room.

"I, marry Miss Munro?" observed Mr. Pepper, looking at the old woman's fixed expression, in the hope of reading her real thoughts.

"Ay, why not?" returned Mrs. Mulligan. "Have you anything to say agin her?"

"On the contrary," said Mr. Pepper, "I have a very high opinion of her, indeed."

"Then," remarked Mrs. Mulligan hopefully, "the sooner it's done the betther. You kin have the money, and it'll set yiz both up in a tidy bit of a shop."

"I marry Miss Munro?" repeated Mr. Pepper. "Are you jesting?"

"Sartinly not," said Mrs. Mulligan indignantly. "Why shouldn't you marry her?"

"There are several reasons," replied Mr. Pepper. "It will be enough, however, to mention that I have a wife and five children in London."

"An' why couldn't you say that before!" exclaimed Mrs. Mulligan rising. "Wastin' my time talkin' to you, an' you a married man!"

She glanced at him wrathfully as she passed and walked out. Then, after a moment's stupefaction, he followed.

"I'll tell you what," exclaimed Mr. Casey, striking his hand on the table as soon as the door was closed, "there's too much of this work goin' on!"

"What d'you mane, Tim?" asked Mr. Munro with a bland smile at the editor's angry face.

"I mean this threatment of Misther Pepper," explained Mr. Casey. "He's gettin' too much

worryin' an' scurryin' in this place. Now, take care, Johnnie Munro, take care he doesn't turn the tables an' lave you and everyone else in the lurch."

"What have I ivir done or said to him'? " asked Mr. Munro astonished.

"I know very well what goes on here; the upper currents and the undher currents," said Mr. Casey with sternly knit brows. "I'm not a fool. The man's losin' patience, an' no wondher. And as for you, Misther Munro, you'll have to pull yourself together. You're burnin' the candle at both ends. Look at the state of this Inn that was a patthern to any place in Ireland. Look at the dhrinkin' an' dancin' an' shoutin' that goes on here! I'm not plaised with it at all. It's not the place for a man like Misther Pepper; and rimimber my words—if there's not a change soon he won't stay longer than he can help."

At this rebuke, Mr. Munro, becoming grave, looked thoughtfully into the grate.

"Sure, the people are only injoyin' thimselves," he suggested mildly.

"Ay, nice injoyment," returned Mr. Casey bitterly. "Turnin' night into day, dhrinkin', dancin', and smokin'. I tell you, Munro, you must put a stop to it. The 'Horse an' Car' becomin' the resort of all the worst carracters in Carrigmore and you're aidin' and abettin' them."

"I don't aid, nor yet"— protested Mr. Munro— "do I abet them."

"Arra, don't talk to me!" said Mr. Casey angrily. 'Haven't I got eyes? Haven't I got ears? Listen to them now! Don't you hear

them? Once for all, you must bring back the 'Horse an' Car' to its old state—ay, higher than that; for now you ought to be more rispictible an' betther conducted. There's more expected of you now. You ought to be a moral example to the town. That's what you ought to be and what you're not."

While Mr. Munro cowered under this stern reproof, Mrs. Munro—who had hitherto remained silent—now rose, her handkerchief in her right hand.

"There's a great dale in what Misther Casey says, Johnnie," said she. "And as for Misther Pepper, if he has a wife an' five childer, he has a heart to fale for thim in thrubble. Now that Mrs. Gallaher has been put away, who should I turn to for advice and comfort in the thoughts that weigh heavy on me whin I see myself sittin' beside grand people, an', maybe, goin' in a saloon carriage round the lake of Maggie Orr?"

Uttering these tearful words, she made her way to the door and the two men turned to look after her in bewilderment as she left."

CHAPTER XVII.

AN UNSYMPATHETIC MAN.

MR. PEPPER was seated in his room, his back to the fireplace, writing at a table which was covered with papers and correspondence. It was late, and he was at his last letter, intending, when it was finished, to get into bed, which was on his left next the wall, hidden by an open screen. There was a knock at the door and he looked up with annoyance.

"Who is that?" he called ungraciously. "Come in."

Mrs. Munro entered, and he at once noticed traces of tears on her rotund cheeks. She held a handkerchief in her right hand.

"I've come t'you, sir," said she in melancholy tones, "for the advice that no one sames able to give me, now that Mrs. Gallaher has left me. Johnnie said she was a common person an' put her out. God help her! she'd sit for hours houldin' my hand; an' there's a power of sympathy in the houldin' of the hand whin the heart is full. There's no one left now to share the thrubbles that's on my mind by day an' night, if I might make so bould as to sit down an' say a word to you, sir."

"Certainly, sit down," observed Mr. Pepper, sitting back himself and waving his pen towards a chair. "What new trouble is this now, I wonder?"

Seating herself with many sighs, Mrs. Munro put her head on one side, holding her handkerchief pressed between her fat hands, and looked at him with woe-begone expression, the corners of her mouth drawn down. Placing his pen on the table, he put his hands in his pockets and waited.

"It's not for the likes o' me, sir," said she, "to pass judgmint on Misther Munro. Altho' he's tuk to dhrink—him that nivir dhrank a dhrop—he's my husbind, an' kin ordher out who he likes an' whin he likes. If he considhers Mrs. Gallaher a common person an' not fit to be associated with, it's not my fault. He raised me up an' he kin put me down."

"Well, Mrs. Munro," remarked Mr. Pepper, when she paused to wipe her eyes and mouth, "I don't want to hurry you. But I'm very busy and anxious to get to bed as soon as possible."

"To be sure, sir, I know that," assented Mrs. Munro, blinking her damp eyes. "I know you have business an' thrubble of your own, an' I have no right to detain you. Only that the thrubble that's on my mind is more nor I kin bear. By day an' by night, it's with me an' won't lave me."

"I am sorry to hear that," said Mr. Pepper. "Perhaps if you could give me some particulars, I might assist you."

"I thank you, sir," she returned gratefully. "I thank you kindly. It's the turn that things have taken that's upset me. An' sure, there are times I sometimes wish that things had bin left

as they were. Only for Katie's sake an' her father's it's not for me to put myself forward. I was elevated enough an' more than I ivir dhreamt of, sir, by becomin' the wife of Misther Munro. For whin his first wife died, it was only undher cook in the kitchen I was, an' Misther Munro used to chuckle me undher the chin whin he met me on the stairs or in the passages. An' whin his first wife died he called me up—it was some months afther—an' he complained that the rashers were underdone. He was at breakfast, sir, by himself. I rimimber it well, for I have just cause. An' whin I thrimbled an' blushed—for I was only a slip of a girl then—he laughed an' tould me not to be frightened, an' called me over to chuckle me undher the chin agin. Then he med me sit on his knee, an' that I couldn't do now—no, sir, I assure you, I've grown that stout an' Misther Munro has grown that thin, I couldn't do it now with aise or comfort."

"This is very interesting," said Mr. Pepper, taking up his pen as if about to write—indeed, he bent towards his letter. "But, really, my time is precious. I take it for granted that Mr. Munro made love to you and married you."

"In troth, he did," said Mrs. Munro, her eyes dilating. "For he was always a good an' thrue man. I nivir had an angry word from him, an' we're twinty-three years married the fifteenth of this month. I little thought, sir, whin I was washin' up graisy dishes in the kitchen of the 'Horse an' Car,' I'd ivir become the wife of Misther Munro. But, there y'are, sir; an' that's how things come about."

Biting his lip, Mr. Pepper threw his pen again

on the table and sat back with an air of resignation. She had paused to wipe her eyes again, and, putting her head on one side as before, looked at him with an air of deep grief.

"But what's that rise that kem to me," she inquired, "wondherful as it was, an' like a dhrame to the prisint day, what's all that, sir, to this? An' that's what's thrubblin' me now an' won't let me rest."

"Oh, we're getting to the trouble," observed Mr. Pepper relieved. "Very good. Out with it."

"Well, it's just this, sir," she explained. "I've bin born an' reared in Carrigmore, an' I've got as high as I want. How am I to face what's forninst me now in foreign lands; maybe, to be taken into a Lord Mayor's bankit on the arm of a Markiss? The lords might take Johnnie at his own valuation, so to spake, for now he kin dhrink as hard as the bist of thim an' spake in tarms that they undherstand. But how am I to opin my mouth before the Quality without knowin' a word of Frinch or knowin' what to talk about? I'd rather be at home here in Carrigmore, just as I am, to live in pace an' quietness."

Rising and kicking his chair aside, Mr. Pepper, pressing his fists against his sides, lifted his shoulders until they were about level with his ears.

"There seems to be an impression out here," said he, "that I came all the way from London to take an interest in people's private feelings. I assure you it is not the case. I am here simply on business. You come to me when I am extremely busy and talk about your feelings. What have I got to do with that? Why do you take it for

granted that because Mrs. Mulligan is a millionaire, or about to become one, that she will share her wealth with you? She may do nothing of the kind. She may make a will and leave all her money to a Cat and Dogs' Home, for that matter. You can't tell. You take too much for granted."

At these words, which she considered brutally heartless, Mrs. Munro's sadness gave place to indignation. She rose, too, and looked sternly across at the smooth-shaven face of Mr. Pepper as he stood with back to the fireplace and his shoulders up.

"A Cat and Dogs' Home!" she exclaimed. "I nivir did hear the likes o' that! An' me the only relation she has in the world!"

"I don't know about that," returned Mr. Pepper coolly. "See there," with a wave of his hand towards a heap of letters on the table. "I get dozens of letters like those every day from people claiming relationship with her. How do I know that some of them are not true? You may assuredly be her nearest relative, but people don't always leave their money to their relatives."

She stared at him with deep reproach, her lips pursed.

"I'm sorry, sir," said she, "I tuk up your time with the feelin's of my heart! I thought I was spakin' to a gintleman. You'll ixcuse me, sir; an' I kin assure you, in future I'll thrubble you no more about the sorras of my mind."

Making an attempt at a curtsey, intended to accentuate her contempt, she turned and left the room, emitting short, dry coughs expressive of indignation as she went down the stairs; and Mr.

Pepper, taking his shoulders down, resumed his seat and his letter-writing. He had got as far as "Yours truly," when there was another knock, and he looked angrily up, anticipating a return of the indignant Mrs. Munro. It was Mr. Casey, however, who entered, remarking with studious politeness:

"I hope, sir, I am not inthrudin'?"

Mr. Pepper held his pen poised and looked over it.

"I am always happy to see you," said he. "But at present I am bound to say I am very busy."

On the entry of this fresh visitor he had pushed back his chair from the table, on which Mr. Casey, having placed his hat and assuming an air of profound importance, drew a letter from his breast pocket.

"I shall not occupy many moments of your time, sir," said he. "But this is too important a matther to be overlooked. Misther Munro, sir, had resaved this communication to-day. It is from no less a person than the Countess of Carrigmore herself. She expresses the desire," he continued, looking impressively from the coronet on the envelope to the reserved face opposite, "to visit Mrs. Mulligan with several friends. It is, in fact, a deputation of the highest persons in the land to request Mrs. Mulligan to open the forthcomin' bazaar in aid of the coal fund for the poor of this town. Perhaps," he continued, presenting the letter, "you would like to read her ladyship's letther?"

Mr. Pepper instantly put up his right hand with the palm towards Mr. Casey.

"I have enough of my own correspondence to read," said he, with a glance at the loaded table, "without troubling myself with the letters of other people."

"But this letther, sir," protested Mr. Casey, with astonishment, "is from the Countess herself."

"I don't dispute that," returned Mr. Pepper. "I take your word for that."

After a fresh stare of silent astonishment, Mr. Casey returned the letter carefully to his pocket.

"Very good, sir," said he. "Then perhaps, as you are aware of the contints, you may see your way to resave her ladyship an' the deputation? Misther Munro is not, at any time, a suitable person for the purpose."

"No," replied Mr. Pepper decisively, in his cold tones. "I have nothing whatever to do with this matter. It doesn't concern me in the least, except in so far as it may possibly delay Mrs. Mulligan's departure for London. And I hope it won't do that. There has been enough delay already."

"You won't resave the deputation, then?" said Mr. Casey, with astonishment.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pepper.

"Oh, very good, sir," said Mr. Casey. "You know your own business best. If you won't and Misther Munro's unfit, there is nothin' for it but to undertake the matther myself. You don't object to that, I hope?"

Mr. Pepper raised his eyebrows with a tired air.

"Why should I object or consent?" he remarked. "Your affairs have nothing to do with me."

Believing that Mr. Pepper was offended, Mr.

Casey took up his hat and looked for a moment irresolutely into the crown.

"I hope, sir," said he, "that Mrs. Mulligan does not worry you? She is eccentric an' uneducated. But she manes well."

"I don't see how you are responsible for her," returned Mr. Pepper. "And my private feelings are my own property."

"Sartinly, an' why not?" said Mr. Casey, with forced affability. "You are quite right, sir. But I don't like to see you put out. There's considherable doubt on my mind as to the way in which Misther Munro's conductin' himself. From bein' a strictly temperate man, a patthern to all, he's taken heavily to dhrink; an' the 'Horse an' Car' has become a byword for all that's bad. The moral tone of this place, sir, is not improved."

"It certainly seems in a bad way," observed Mr. Pepper, looking significantly at his watch. "But I don't see how it concerns me."

"You are not, of coorse," assented Mr. Casey, "responsible for the decay in the moral atmosphere."

"Certainly not," returned Mr. Pepper. "It has nothing to do with me; I am not a clergyman. I'm here strictly on business. Mr. Munro must look after his own affairs."

"I hope you are not vexed with me," said Mr. Casey, "for puttin' the matther before you as a public man?"

"Oh, no; I am not vexed," returned Mr. Pepper, reseating himself at the table and reaching for a handful of letters, "but I am very busy."

"Precisely!" said Mr. Casey. "I quite undherstand that. If you could lend me ten pounds

for a few days I would take it as a personil favour."

"I never lend money," said Mr. Pepper, opening a letter.

"Say five," suggested Mr. Casey gently. "Five won't break you."

"It is a strict principle with me," said Mr. Pepper, "never to lend money."

"I bring it down to a contemptible ten shillin's," said Mr. Casey, "and I name the period of repayment at three days. I'm expectin' some outstandin' debts for advertisemints."

"It would be as easy for me," remarked Mr. Pepper, "to lend ten pounds as ten shillings. But I never alter my principles."

"I hope I have not detained you?" said Mr. Casey, showing his teeth as he made towards the door.

"Not overmuch," responded Mr. Pepper, and Mr. Casey, slapping his hat on the back of his head, strutted out.

Mr. Munro was comfortably seated in his own private apartment, his slippered feet either side of the mantelpiece, when Mr. Casey came in and began walking slowly up and down with folded arms and knit brows.

"What's wrong with you, Timothy?" asked Mr. Munro, taking down his feet and glancing over his shoulder.

"I've been with Misther Pepper an' I'm not satisfied," replied Mr. Casey gloomily.

"What are you not satisfied with, Tim?" inquired Mr. Munro.

"He's cowld an' severe," answered Mr. Casey.

"I've been thinkin' how he could have been offinded an' the only explination I kin find is that he's bin ignored."

"Ignored, Editorial?"

Ceasing his march, Mr. Casey approached the blandly-smiling Innkeeper.

"He came here," he explained, "with wondherful news, and we lavished all our attintion on Mrs. Mulligan an' left him out in the cowld."

Still smiling, Mr. Munro pointed a forefinger at his depressed companion.

"You've hit it, Timothy!" said he; "an' that shows what a wondherful brain you've got, for it nivir sthruck me before. But is it too late to give him a welkim?"

After a few moments' deep thought, Mr. Casey, with an air of relief, hit his right fist against the palm of his left hand.

"I see it all now!" he exclaimed. "We must give him a rale public welkim an' a little music. I'll arrange it. Kape it dark. Not a word to a sowl."

"Whativir you do," assented Mr. Munro admiringly, "is sure to be well done. An' if there's a man can make Misther Pepper less like an iceberg wandherin' about by itself, your that man!"

Two nights later, when Mr. Pepper was undressing—he was, in fact, in shirt and trousers—he was startled by a sudden blare of music directly outside his room. So unexpected and fierce was the outburst, that he staggered back and sat down on the bed with terrified eyes turned towards the door. After a moment's rest there, his first shock

of surprise was succeeded by indignation. White to the lips he rushed to the door, and, tearing it open, saw Mr. Casey close at hand, beating time with a roll of paper to the bandsmen, who, with brass and wooden instruments, filled the little corridor. Below, the stairs were crowded with delighted members of the public; and above, on Mrs. Mulligan's landing, Mr. Munro stood, clapping his hands in a frenzy and shouting:

"Loudher, your sowls! Give it to him!"

"What's this?" cried Mr. Pepper, almost inarticulate with rage. "What is the meaning of this? Where's Mr. Munro?"

Standing on tiptoe, Mr. Casey waved his rolled paper at the bandsmen.

"Enough!" he shouted. "He's here. Silence! Hould on now! D'you hear me? Silence!"

"Let thim go on, Tim!" yelled Mr. Munro. "Let thim bang away!"

For some minutes members of the band here and there kept on playing; but gradually, after repeated cries of "Silence!" from those on the stairs, all the instruments ceased.

Making a step forward, Mr. Pepper raised his right arm.

"Begone!" he exclaimed. "How dare you create such a disturbance here? Where are the police?"

Indignant cries of protest arose at these remarks and the demeanour of some of the men near him caused Mr. Pepper to reflect, in the midst of his indignation, that they might be capable of a more unpleasant outrage than a brazen serenade. Suppressing his feelings, he turned towards Mr. Casey,

who, taking off his hat, unfurled the long roll of paper.

"Mr. Pepper, sir," said Mr. Casey in his most resonant tones, "I hold in my hand an address of welkim to you, sir, from the inhabitants of the ancient town of Carrigmore, signed by the most infloointial mimbers of the community. With your kind permission I'll rade it to you. Hould on, now, till I get my glasses."

Whilst Mr. Casey hurriedly searched through his pockets, the bandsmen and people on the stairs preserved silence, but Mr. Munro shouted down encouragingly:

"Lash out, Editorial! Give her the spur!"

It soon became apparent that Mr. Casey could not find his spectacles; his search became more feverish and the address, which he had put under his arm, dropped to the floor.

"Never mind," observed Mr. Pepper, "I shall take the address as read."

"Well, sir," resumed Mr. Casey, picking up the document, "you will find, whin you cast your eye over it, that it embodies a whole-hearted, downright Irish welkim. We have not failed to appreciate, sir, your arrival among us or your generous and humane conduct since you came. We have been so astounded at the wondherful news you brought to us, that we had not time to formulate an address before. But, betther late than nivir. We wish you long life an' happiness and a pleasint sojourn in Carrigmore."

When the cheers subsided, Mr. Pepper, still white with suppressed rage, diplomatically bowed.

"Mr. Casey, ladies and gentlemen," said he, "I

thank you deeply for this unexpected honour. I am very pleased to be in your interesting town and under the hospitable roof of my friend, Mr. Munro. I value this address most highly and shall always cherish it as one of the most pleasing mementoes of my visit to Ireland. I now hope you will be good enough to retire and permit me to wish you all good-night ! "

With that he went into his room, closed and locked the door ; and having torn up the address and flung it into the waste-paper basket, got into bed, covering up his head with the clothes. For the next fifteen minutes, however, the band continued their serenade, after which, giving three cheers, they departed, followed by Mr. Casey, beaming at the success of his happy inspiration.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ARISTOCRATIC DEPUTATION.

NEXT day Mr. Casey, despite the late hours overnight, was early at the "Horse and Car." He had purchased a new frock-coat and tall hat, and wore gloves. Alone he paced about the hall, in and out of the public rooms, and up and down the stairs. The restlessness of his movements was indicative of the activity of his mind. Events were, indeed, marching with rapidity. At that self-same hour Kate was dressing Mrs. Mulligan to receive the distinguished deputation which, headed by the Countess of Carrigmore herself, had signified their intention of calling at eleven o'clock. The news of the bequest to Mrs. Mulligan had already travelled far beyond her native town. She had been interviewed by several gentlemen of the Press and her portraits had been published in newspapers, magazines, and on picture postcards. People referred to her as "The Carrigmore Millionaire," and her doings and peculiarities, imaginary and otherwise, were chronicled in the Society papers. On this eventful morning everybody connected with

the Inn were attired in their best. Mrs. Munro was in black satin, and Mr. Casey's principal object in arriving so early was to endeavour to keep Mr. Munro sober until the deputation was over. Scattered groups of townspeople began to arrive almost as soon as Mr. Casey himself, and stood outside, looking for the most part up the street in anticipation of the arrival of the deputation, and at the windows in the hope of catching a glimpse of Mrs. Mulligan.

About ten o'clock a constable put in an appearance. Half an hour later, when the groups without had become a large crowd, a dozen police were present. Few customers were allowed to enter, Slogger O'Neil, in his blue and gold uniform, keeping careful watch at the entrance.

At last the motor cars were sighted and the crowd began to seethe with excitement. The police forced a clear pathway, and presently, with much horn blowing, six motor cars arrived in single file crowded with ladies and a sprinkling of gentlemen. Then, as the cars stood palpitating, in a long half circle, and the chauffeurs stooped to steady the machines, the distinguished occupants alighted, laughing and chatting. Mr. Casey stood in the doorway, his tall hat in his gloved hand. Behind him were Mr. Munro, Mrs. Munro, and the Slogger. To the young and charming Countess, who was the first to arrive up the steps, Mr. Casey introduced himself, and the deputation—seven in number—having assembled in the hall, he led them upstairs to Mrs. Mulligan's room.

The ladies chatted loudly and laughed up the two flights of stairs—evidently enjoying the novelty

of their position—until the landing was reached, when Mr. Casey, apologizing for having troubled them so much, knocked loudly at the door of Mrs. Mulligan's room.

Mrs. Mulligan, who had stolidly refused to receive them anywhere but in her own private apartment, was seated on the step ladder, dressed in black satin with gold ornaments. Kate Munro, in a very tight-fitting but fashionable dress, stood, nervous and red, close to her grand-aunt.

The ladies, who seemed as curious and excited as schoolgirls, exchanged merry glances when they saw the grim old woman steadily regarding them through her sunken eyes.

"This, my lady," said Mr. Casey, waving a hand towards Mrs. Mulligan with the air of a showman, "is Mrs. Mulligan."

Advancing, the countess held out her little gloved hand which Mrs. Mulligan, without rising, took and let drop.

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Mulligan," said the countess sweetly. "We are not going to do anything dreadful."

"Arra, why should I be alarmed?" returned Mrs. Mulligan, shaking the upper part of her body as if to get rid of something between her shoulder-blades. "There's nothin' to be afraid of. It's not the first time I've seen a pack of women."

The countess turned to her principal guest—a fat, handsome blonde, and both laughed heartily. A lady behind remarked:

"She's really too droll for anything!"

"Well, that's right," said the countess, addressing Mrs. Mulligan. "And we are glad to find we are

not such terrible creatures. But, now, Mrs. Mulligan, you must want to know why we have called on you."

"No, I don't," responded Mrs. Mulligan. "If you like to tell me you can. If you don't, you nadent. It's all the same to me."

There was a general burst of laughter, and the ladies declared that she was irresistible. But Mr. Casey, standing near the door, hat in hand, frowned in an impotent manner at the old woman, who continued to contemplate her self-invited guests with stoical resignation.

"The fact is, Mrs. Mulligan," explained the countess, "we are getting up our annual bazaar for the coal fund and we want you to open it."

Staring in amazement at the countess, as the latter adjusted her veil, Mrs. Mulligan worked her shoulder-blades again and glanced down at Kate's reddened face.

"Is it me open the bazaar?" she remarked, turning to the countess. "Sure that's no work for an ould woman. Can't you get a man to do it? There's many's a poor man 'ud be glad to earn a sixpinse for the job."

Looking puzzled, the countess conversed in lowered tones with her friend and the other ladies laughed again.

"Oh, I see what you mean," observed the countess, turning once more to Mrs. Mulligan. "But we don't want you to open the doors, you know. It's not that. You have merely to declare the bazaar open. It's quite easy. You understand?"

"Why don't you declare it yourself?" suggested

Mrs. Mulligan, becoming impatient and searching in her bosom for her pipe. " Why should you run afther an ould crature like me ? "

She was evidently more puzzled than the ladies and, having found her pipe, struck a match—despite the frantic pantomine of Mr. Casey from the door—and proceeded to puff long, snaky wreaths of smoke towards the faces of the deputation, who hurriedly let down their motor veils.

" But you will come to the bazaar, won't you ? " pleaded the countess pathetically. " It's for the benefit of the poor. We don't want you to do anything disagreeable. But we thought you'd prove such a draw, you know. It will be so nice of you. Do come, dear Mrs. Mulligan ! "

The sweet simplicity of this appeal seemed to affect Mrs. Mulligan. She reconsidered her refusal, as she thrust her hand down the neck of her dress and worked her fingers about. At the same time the countess stepped away from the smoke, the odour of which quickly pervaded the room.

" Well, if it plaises you," observed Mrs. Mulligan, taking the pipe from her mouth and spitting on the floor, " I suppose I must."

The blonde lady, being plump and easily heated, had reddened owing to the exertion of coming upstairs. She now turned pale, closed her eyes and began to sway from side to side. Several of the ladies nearest the door had already gone out with their hands to their foreheads.

" And you'll be good enough, I'm sure," said the countess faintly—for she, too, was turning ill—" to de—declare the b—bazaar open, because——"

Her blonde friend had reeled against her, then

for a moment steadying herself, looked wildly towards the door. Her companions caught her and led her out to the landing whither she was quickly followed by the countess and the remnant of the deputation.

Carefully piloting the ladies, Mr. Casey led them down to the hall; the fainting lady was helped into the coffee-room and deposited in a chair. Here, too, all the ladies seated themselves, lying back exhausted while Mr. Casey roared through the hall for champagne and brandy. The servants scurried to obey the orders, and the ladies, after a short rest and refreshments, went out slowly, looking ill and miserable, to the great surprise of their companions and the people outside. In a few minutes all were again seated, and to the blaring of the horns, the cars sped away, bearing the distinguished deputation and friends from the admiring gaze of the crowd.

Mr. Casey, who had bowed the aristocracy down the steps, watched the cars disappear; then, turning inward, met Mr. Munro, who was smiling and rubbing his hands.

"Well, Tim," said the Innkeeper enthusiastically, "the grand ivint went off in style!"

Turning savagely upon him, Mr. Casey looked him up and down with ineffable contempt.

"That's what I thought you'd think!" he exclaimed furiously. "But there's one thing sartin —I don't care who hears me—Mrs. Mulligan ought to be horsewhipped! D'you hear that? Horsewhipped! To thrate people of that position, the very highest in the land, as she thrated them!"

"Glory be to God, Misther Casey!" said the startled Mr. Munro. "What did she do?"

"What did she do? Spit in their faces!" said Mr. Casey fiercely. "If she'd bin a man I'd have pitched her through the window. But clear the way now, I'll have a talk with her."

The privilege of public entry having been restored by the departure of the aristocrats and the retirement of Mr. O'Neil in search of refreshments, the habitual customers, who were in force, had already begun to throng in and were squeezing past Mr. Casey and pushing him in the back. He turned about to look at several offenders indignantly, but the bar at the end of the passage was in sight and they paid no heed to him. Putting on his new silk hat—which hitherto he had held in his gloved right hand—with some violence, he strode towards the stairs followed by Mr. Munro and his wife.

Bursting open the door of Mrs. Mulligan's room, Mr. Casey found her still seated, and composedly smoking on the ladder. Without a word he strode up to her and shook his fist in her face. Kate, who was seated near, panting under the pressure of her new frock, looked in astonishment at him, but Mrs. Mulligan herself did not change expression, merely taking the pipe a moment from her mouth to spit on the floor.

"For two pins, I'd brain you!" exclaimed Mr. Casey furiously. "What sort o' woman are you at all to thrate the highest ladies in the land like a savage?"

Mr. and Mrs. Munro had now entered, and Mr. Munro stood close to the door, smiling vaguely

whilst his wife sat down breathless after the ascent of the stairs and leaned forward, her fat hands on her knees.

"Sure, Misther Casey," said Mrs. Munro, catching her breath, "don't be too hard on her. She manes well an' kindly. But what does she know of high sassiety?"

"The divil take her!" said Mr. Casey, staring indignantly from Mrs. Munro to the unmoved old woman. "She made a nice hash of the whole thing. But you'll go to the bazaar an' open it—mind that now! If I have to dhrag you by the hair of the head."

"What did they want with me?" said Mrs. Mulligan. "Don't they want to make a jackeen of me because they heard I got a few pounds left me? Sure, I know thim kind o' people, Misther Casey. They tuk little notice o' me whin I hadn't a rag to my back or a shoe to my fut."

"There's no way out o' this," said Mr. Casey resolutely, "an' I don't care who hears me say it—but by marryin' me. An' marry me you must! D'you hear that now? It'll be the makin' of you, for I know how to thrate the aristocracy, if you don't."

"Bedad, my marryin' days are past, achushla," observed Mrs. Mulligan. "But here's Kate now dyin' to be married. An' Kate agra," turning to Kate, who flushed hotly, "the divil a fut I'll set outside Carrigmore for Misther Pepper or anyone else until I see you married to a good, dacint boy. What d'you say to that, ma'am?" nodding at Mrs. Munro.

"Troth, an' I think there's sound sinse in it."

returned Mrs. Munro. "Kate could marry anyone she likes now, I sippose. But I'd rather she tuk a lad from Carrigmore. For it's the foreign nobility that thrubbles me—not knowing how I should spake to thim, an' maybe, someone come out an' want to prisint Katie to the King."

Turning about, Mr. Casey looked at Mrs. Munro's troubled face with some astonishment.

"Don't let your fancy run away with you, ma'am," said he.

"That's right enough, too, Misther Casey," said she, sighing. "But thim foreign nobility kape me awake at night an' that's the long an' short of it."

"Well, now, to come down to facts," remarked Mr. Munro, with his back against the door and a smirk across his face. "For facts afther all is the pint. Who, ma'am, have you got in your mind for Kate? Because it's our business to see your wishes carried out."

"I've got a boy in my mind for her," replied Mrs. Mulligan. "A dacint good boy. None o' your foreign nobility about him. James Donohue's the boy I've got in my mind for Kate."

Despite the presence of her grand-aunt, and the pressure of her tight costume, Kate started up indignantly, looked defiantly at Mrs. Mulligan, and tossed her head.

"'Deed, I wouldn't be seen dead with him!" said she.

"Kate," said her father gravely, "mind what you're sayin'. It's your grand-aunt's wish."

"I don't care!" exclaimed Kate, tears starting

to her eyes. "I don't want to marry him. I don't want to marry anyone!"

"Oh, don't you, indade!" observed Mrs. Mulligan ironically. "Thrust an ould woman like me to know the signs. 'Deed, you do, Kate, want to marry anyone, an' a dacenter lad you'll not get than James Donohue, sarch Carrigmore from top to bottom."

"You'll have to think out the matther sariously, Kate," said her father. "Rimimber, it's the wish o' your gran'-aunt."

Mr. Casey had remained an astonished listener to this unexpected proposition—which, however, was not novel to the Munros—but at last he put on his hat, which he had taken off when entering, and turned on his heel.

"There's no use in settlin' matthers in this offhand manner," said he, addressing Mr. Munro. "Kate kin afford to wait. Whin Mrs. Mulligan an' myself get wedded it's time enough for Kate. An' now for a quiet word or two with you down-stairs."

Taking Mr. Munro by the arm he led him away; and when they were gone there was silence in the attic for some few minutes.

Mrs. Mulligan, her elbows on her knees, supported her cheeks on her fists, the oak stick being across her lap; she smoked slowly, and her sunken eyes looked into space. Smiling and frowning in turns, Mrs. Munro rubbed one fat hand over the back of the other. At length the persistent sound of Kate's sobbing seemed to rouse her grand-aunt.

"There must be an ind to this," said Mrs. Mulligan sternly, "for whativer Misther Pepper

wants, he can't be kept waitin' for ivir, an' the sooner we get hoult of the money the betther. That's the raisin' "—here she glanced sideways at Kate's bent head—" I put my fut down on Jack Gallaher once an' for all ! "

" If you've med up your mind, aunt agra," observed Mrs. Munro with an undertone of regret, " sure that's all that's to be said on the matther. For myself, I'd rather bide by the people I know an' have bin reared with. But I sippose if we must thravel we must, an' there's an ind to it. They've sthrange manners on the continent, I'm tould, an' I cud stan' by an' see Johnnie kissin' the grand jooks, but if I had to make up the bed of a foreign nobleman, where would I be ? "

" I nivir said I wanted Jack Gallaher ! " protested Kate, turning hotly on her implacable grand-aunt. " I told you of'en, an' I tell you again, I don't want to be a married ayther to a foreign nobleman or anyone else."

" I won't stir a fut out o' Carrigmore," insisted Mrs. Mulligan, " till I see you married an' done for ; an' James Donohue's the boy that'll make you a happy woman."

" If it is my duty," remarked Mrs. Munro, following her own line of thought, " to mix with the great people of the world, I'll do it with the help of God ; but Katie's young, an' could larn the ways aisier than me to talk in Frinch an' touch the light guitar as the song says, if it's the will o' God."

" James Donohue," said Mrs. Mulligan, thrusting a forefinger down the bowl of her pipe, " is the bist-hearted young man in Carrigmore, an' if Kate

doesn't have him she'll nivir handle a pinny of my money. That's all I've got to say now, an' you kin make the bist of it."

"Very well, gran'-aunt!" exclaimed Kate, starting up passionately, "I don't want any of your money, an' nivir did! I kin live as I lived before I heard a word about it. I'd rather dhrown myself than marry a man I didn't care for!"

Gathering up the train of her French gown, she walked indignantly from the room. On the landing, as she paused undecided whether to go up or down, she saw a young man hastening up the stairs.

"Miss Munro!" said he.

Recognizing him, she drew herself proudly aside; and, for a moment James Donohue, open-mouthed, a hand on the bannister, stared in amazed admiration at the glittering beauty of her costume.

"What do you want with me?" she asked coldly.

It was the voice of Kate Munro, and James Donohue came to himself. As he arrived a step higher she drew back.

"Miss Munro," said he, respectfully addressing the French gown, "Jack wants to know if you'll see him to-night? He wants to see you, he says, about the most important business of his life."

"I don't know that I'll see him at all," said Kate, "I'm tired of all this."

"Tired of him?" exclaimed James in choking voice. "Would there be a chance—would another man dare to hope that you would listen to him? There's another man cares an' cares more than his body or soul without any make believe, an' would

lie down on the ground for you to walk on if you only gev the word."

He paused, panting and suddenly alarmed at his own audacity.

"You may tell Jack," said Kate, "that I'll see him here just where I am at presint at ten o'clock."

"Thank you, Miss Munro," returned James humbly. "I'll go across an' tell him at once."

At the appointed hour Kate was on the landing looking down over the bannisters at the glare of light in the hallway. She had left the door of Mrs. Mulligan's room slightly open so that the lamp within might show her new costume to advantage. Five minutes had passed since the Town Hall clock had struck ten, and yet she remained stooping and gazing down. Presently two of the figures from the dense group at the bar detached themselves and disappeared, to reappear next moment softly ascending the stairs. One rested half-way and sat down facing the hall. The other proceeded. Kate drew back a step towards the window, and the beam of the lamp shot through, brightening the sheen of her dress. She felt her back hair; then glanced at her bangles and turned them round. Next moment the man arrived and paused in astonishment.

"Is it Kate?" he asked incredulously.

"H'sh!" she whispered, glancing towards the open door.

"But, is it Kate?" he repeated under his breath.

"Of coorse it's me, Jack," she replied in the same tone. "Who else should it be?"

Reaching the landing, he pushed the door a little

wider, letting a broader gleam fall on the shining bracelets and glittering dress.

"I didn't know you," said he, "you look so terrible grand an' fine."

"It's little you care about me," said she, "no matter how I'm dhressed."

When he came closer and took her hands, the trinkets on the bracelets tinkled.

"I haven't much time to spare, Kate," said he, "and I'll postpone all the nice compliments I owe you. But I want you now to answer the question I asked you before. Will you marry me?"

She gave a low, unhappy laugh.

"It's not you that's spakin' now," said she, "but your mother. I know very well that you don't care for me, Jack; I've known that many a long day."

"Oh, well, then," returned Jack with affected resentment, "I may take it you won't have me? You don't want me?"

Releasing her right hand she placed it on his arm.

"Step back further, Jack," said she. "Gran'-aunt has ears like a ferret."

They stood then together, a short flight of steps on the left, their faces towards Mrs. Mulligan's door.

"Jack," said Kate again, resting her shoulder affectionately against his, "I know very well it's the money you're thinkin' of an' not me."

"That's not thrue at all!" protested Jack, so loudly that Kate hurriedly put a hand over his mouth.

"What's the use of denyin' it?" said she. "But, Jack, if I thought it would help you to care for me, ivir so little, afther we were married"—Jack gave an unpleasant start—"then," concluded Kate with a sob in her voice, "I'd gladly give you all I was worth an' the whole world at the back of it."

"Then I may go to mother," observed Jack, "an' tell her that you'll have me?"

There was silence after this regretful remark. Mrs. Mulligan was heard stirring within.

"Isn't it a quare thing," said Kate musingly, "for a man to want a girl to marry him that he nivir even put his arm round?"

Reluctantly he put his left arm round her. She clasped the hand of that arm and held it tightly to her side. James Donohue, seated as sentry on the stairs, looked up through the bannisters and moved down a step.

"I'm afeard I must go into gran'-aunt now," said Kate, sighing deeply; then, after a pause, during which he did not speak but felt her heart thumping against his hand, she added: "You'll be glad to get rid of me."

"Oh, not at all," protested Jack faintly.

"An' you nivir kissed me in your life, not even wanst!" said Kate in trembling tones.

Then he kissed her. She put her arm around his neck so as to hold their lips longer together, and James Donohue moved down another step.

"Oh, Jack, darlin'!" murmured Kate, "you will love me a little afther we're married, won't you?"

Before he could speak there was a shuffle of feet

within. Kate hurriedly pushed him towards the stairs, down which he fled as Mrs. Mulligan suddenly appeared in the open doorway.

As Jack Gallaher crossed the Market Square he wiped his lips with the back of his hand.

"If there's one thing I hate more than another," he observed to his companion, James Donohue, "it's the kissin' business. It's not in my line at all."

"Ay, some people don't like it," James returned gloomily. "I'll say good-night now, Jack."

"Why!" exclaimed Jack, halting in surprise. "Won't you come over an' have a smoke? Aren't you feelin' well?"

"No, I don't feel very well," replied James, turning his whitened face away. "I'll see you soon, Jack. Good-bye!"

He went away down the street, followed by Jack's surprised eyes. In the doorway of Gallaher's Stores Jack's mother had been standing anxiously awaiting the result of the interview. The blaze of light shooting across from the Inn danced on her tall, motionless figure.

"Well, Jack?" she gasped as he approached.

"It's all right, mother," said he sulkily. "Kate Munro's consinted to be my wife."

Flinging her arms about his neck, his mother kissed him passionately.

"My own boy!" said she in a choking voice. "My Jack! Your mother'll slape well to-night, thank God!"

"There, that'll do, mother!" protested Jack, freeing himself with an effort from her embrace, "I've had enough o' that."

Pushing past her, he went into the back parlour and flung himself so emphatically into a seat that he awoke his father, who sat up, grasping both sides of the chair and staring across at him with amazement.

CHAPTER XIX.

POISON.

It was the night of Kate Munro's birthday, which was celebrated in the lavish Munro manner by a great supper, followed by dancing. Weary of the festivities, Mrs. Mulligan had retired rather earlier than usual, and having smoked her last pipe and half finished her last tumbler of whisky and water, composed herself to slumber in her garret bed, with the clothes tucked under her chin. On a little round table beside her, within easy reach, was the tumbler and the clay pipe. She had left the door slightly ajar, so that while she awaited sleep she could be lulled by the roaring from the bar and the dancing and music in the coffee-room. Soon the sound of the hilarity seemed to wander to a confused murmur, further and further, until silence came and then slumber. About half an hour passed, when a man crept up the stairs, and, taking off his heavy boots on the landing, stole into the lumber room and stood there, alone in the moonlight, listening. In his clenched right hand he held a small paper parcel, and as he stood gazing towards the door of the garret straining his ears for a sound from

the sleeper, he could hear the beating of his own heart over the sounds of the dancing feet and the lively music downstairs. Sometimes he glanced through the window at the stableyard, sometimes over his shoulder at the door by which he had entered ; and the beating of his heart grew so loud, that he muttered an oath under his breath and struck himself on the chest. At last he crept forward to the ladder, then stumbled over a stool and stood stockstill again, muttering bad language and listening with an extra strain for a sound from the attic. He heard nothing from that quarter save the rhythmical snoring of the old woman in the bed. At length, mounting the ladder, he pushed open the door and thrust in his one-eyed face. There she lay, reposeful, with the moonlight, which came through the little window, falling directly on her upturned face. Another step and he was in the room. Yet another towards the table, and he had taken up the tumbler and emptied into it the contents of the little paper parcel. Very softly, with his powerful rough hand, he laid back the tumbler, just giving it a slight shaking to mix up the draught—and all the time keeping his one eye on the old, upturned face above the bedclothes. His task over, he crept away quicker than he had come ; stole to the landing, and, sitting down on the stairs, pulled on his brogues.

Meanwhile it was noticed that of all the dancers in the coffee-room, Mr. Casey was by far the most enthusiastic. He danced with one lady after another, barely waiting to ask permission, whirling them from their seats and whirling them unex-

pectedly back again. It was an amazing performance for a man who had not danced for over twenty years. As several remarked on that eventful night, he was "the life an' sowl of the party." Moreover, during the cessation of the music he sang songs, and, finally, still unwearied, though flushed and perspiring, jumped up on a chair in the centre of the room and made a speech.

"Ladies an' gentlemen," said he, turning about and waving his right arm around, "I nivir enjoyed myself so much before in all my born days. Can I say the same of all here? (Cries of "Sartinly!" "Yis!" "Bravo, Misther Casey!") My heart," continued Mr. Casey, panting as the words rushed from him, "is as light as a feather. An' yit, there's just one cloud o' sorra"—here his voice thickened with emotion—"the glorious lady, the noble-hearted woman, to whose good fortune we all owe these happy evenin's, has, I deeply regret to say, gone to bed! She is slapin' the slape of the good, the thrue, the benivilint! There is no bettther-hearted, noble-minded native of the dear ould town of Carrigmore, an' I say, long life to her! Long life to her!"

The music started again, and Mr. Casey, jumping from his chair, rushed at Miss Cassidy, the post-mistress, and whirled her round in a frantic waltz, until she implored him in anguished tones to find a younger partner. There was not one person in the room who failed to recognize how—apparently—happy he was. After each mad dance he looked at his watch, until someone remarked this to him, when he became momentarily solemn and ceased to refer again to the time. However, during

another pause in the dancing, he went into the hall "to cool himself," as he loudly stated; and from the hall wandered towards the crowded bar. He came back again and sat down near the front door to allow the cool night breeze to sweep in on him, and he watched the groups of townsfolk gazing openmouthed at the swiftly passing figures of the dancers through the great plate-glass window.

Presently Mr. Casey turned in his seat and kept watchful eyes peering into the shadows around the back staircase, until he saw the dark figure and ashen features of the Slogger stealthily making in the direction of Mr. Munro's private room.

Then Mr. Casey suddenly rose, and, bursting back to the coffee-room, rushed into the midst of the dancers, and with a sudden shout and upraised arm, stopped both the music and the dance.

"Ladies an' gentlemen," he exclaimed, as all turned towards him with astonished faces, "ixcuse me stoppin' the charmin' dance for a moment. But it has occurred to me that our happiness would be complated if we had the prisince of our dear frind an' benefactor, Misther Munro. Who'll voluntere to go for Misther Munro an' bring him here? Will Misther O'Mara oblige us?"

"Sartinly!" replied that young man, starting from his corner and heading for the door. "I think I know where to find him."

"Bring him here!" shouted Mr. Casey after him, "at all hazards."

Then the dancing was resumed, and Mr. Casey, despite an hour's constant exercise, started again with a fresh supply of partners. But in a few minutes, when Mr. O'Mara, with disappointed face,

reappeared, Mr. Casey, who was on the watch, stopped the dance again.

"Where's Misther Munro?" he shouted.

"He's in his room," answered Mr. O'Mara, "talkin' with the Slogger!"

"What d'you say?" exclaimed Mr. Casey, loudly. "Talkin' with the Slogger? At this hour!" Taking out his watch he added: "Talkin' with the Slogger at fifteen minutes past eleven? Well, won't he come?"

"He says he's too busy," said Mr. O'Mara, making back to his corner.

"That's a quare thing!" cried Mr. Casey, unable to control his excitement, "to say, that he's so busy talkin' with the Slogger that he can't come an' jine us! All right! Go ahead, fiddlers!"

So far, Mr. Casey was satisfied. He had gained his point. In the minds of thirty persons there present he had fixed the fact that at fifteen minutes past eleven, on that eventful night, Mr. Munro was closeted with the Slogger. With a jubilant wave of the hand, Mr. Casey set the dance going afresh and interrupted it no more. Selecting a fat young woman, who was standing against the wall, he whirled her round, but now, whilst he laughed and shouted to the fiddlers to go faster, he began to see a nasty picture in his mind, which defined itself as two figures swinging side by side in a prison yard. So vivid did this unpleasant image become, that he stopped short in the dance and rushed through the group at the door into the hall to steady his nerves with a sight of the familiar open space and the staring townsfolk on the pavement. Still, when for a moment he closed his eyes, he saw

the two figures swinging, and gradually a third figure appeared swinging beside them. His mock merriment had died away now; his lips were dry and cold sweat oozed from his pallid face. Why would that third figure persist in swinging beside the other two? Had he over-acted? Had he looked at his watch once too often? The more he strove to put these unpleasant questions from him, the more they insisted on repeating themselves over and over, until they beat in his brain with overmastering power. Creeping down the hall past the loud talking men at the bar, he slunk down the stairs into the passage as if on his way to the kitchen. Here, alone in the dark little passage, he leaned against the wall to draw breath, pressing his fingers against his burning eyeballs. Then, turning, he softly opened a door and let himself out into the stableyard. As he closed the door on himself, he gazed around, standing motionless and breathless, to see if he was alone. There was champing of hay in the stalls, whisking of horses' tails and the occasional stir of hoofs. The moon, in a clear starry sky, glittered on the roofs of the stables, and dense shadows lurked in the corners of the broad yard and under the far wall. Making a tour of the yard, he went into the stables, looked up towards the hayloft, then out again to feel his way round the outer wall. Assured that he was really alone, he stood for some moments, looking fearfully up at the little window under the shelving garret roof. Presently, stealing towards the back window, he found a ladder, and with great difficulty placed it up against the wall until its top rested under the garret window. Another

agitated look around and he hastily mounted, going faster as he went higher, until he stood gazing in through the window and saw the moonlit face of the motionless old woman and the empty tumbler beside her bed. Then he descended, and as he was about to step off the ladder a husky voice said :

" Is it all over ? "

Reeling back several paces and trembling violently from head to toe, Mr. Casey began to breathe in short gasps.

At the same time a whirl of thoughts rushed through his terrified mind.

" What's the matter with you, Misther Casey ? " asked the husky voice again. " Is it all over ? "

Then he became conscious that he was in the presence of two men, and that the owner of the voice was Mr. Munro, while the slouching figure behind was that of the Slogger. Coming back, Mr. Casey placed a trembling hand on the ladder.

" Go up an' see for yourself," said he.

Mr. Munro instantly mounted and Mr. Casey held the ladder, the Slogger standing motionless behind. Having got to the top, Mr. Munro was so long staring in that Mr. Casey became impatient.

" Come down ow a that ! " said he in a loud whisper, giving the ladder a little shake, and Mr. Munro was so frightened, and hastened so quickly, that he slid for the most part on his stomach, frantically clutching at the ladder until his feet kicked the ground.

" It's all over," said he breathlessly. " She's as dead as a door-nail an' the tumbler's empty."

"Here, help with the ladder," said Mr. Casey in a deep tremulous voice, and the three men gradually lowered the ladder until it lay lengthwise on the ground.

"Where's my tin pound?" asked the Slogger, as they straightened themselves and looked into each other's blanched faces.

"Are you spakin' t' me?" asked Mr. Casey defiantly.

"I'm spakin' to Misther Munro," returned the Slogger doggedly. "It was he promised me the tin pound if I did what you said I was to do."

"What d'you mane?" said Mr. Casey, more defiantly than before. "'What I said you were to do?'"

"You said I was to put the rat pisin into her whisky," explained the Slogger.

With a hard bitter laugh, Mr. Casey made a show of folding his aching arms.

"You've a quare mimory," said he. "I nivir rimimber sayin' a word to you like what you say. You'll have to prove that in a coort of justice, maybe, an' you'll find it hard. Where were you on the night of the thirteenth of Siptimber at half-past ten o'clock?"

"Sure, that was whin I was goin' upstairs," answered the Slogger, "to do what you tould me."

"Ijit!" shouted Mr. Casey, seizing him by the shoulder and attempting to shake the burly figure. "Is it hangin' you want? Or, kin you prove an alibi?"

"Prove a what?" asked the Slogger.

"Prove that you were fast aslape in the hay-loft from ten o'clock to-night till to-morra mornin'!"

exclaimed Mr. Casey. Turning to Mr. Munro, he added : " Does he want to hang us all ? "

" Thry him agin," suggested Mr. Munro in trembling voice.

Folding his arms again, Mr. Casey stepped back from the down-faced Slogger and surveyed him with judicial stare.

" You're on your oath," said he sternly. " Now answer the question : Where were you on the night of the thirteenth of Siptimber at ten o'clock ? "

" Aslape in the hay-loft," replied the Slogger.

" Right ! " exclaimed Mr. Casey enthusiastically. " An' you nivir saw me the whole of that day ? "

" Sure, I see you now," said the Slogger, with surprise.

" Fool ! Ijit ! " cried Mr. Casey. " Have you no brains ? Did you see or spake to me the whole o' that day ? "

" I did not," replied the Slogger sullenly.

" Right agin ! " exclaimed Mr. Casey. " Go in now Misther Munro an' get the money."

" An' I have it inside right enough," observed Mr. Munro, as he turned remorsefully towards the back door. " But I'd give twinty times that if this hadn't happened ! "

He went back into the house, followed by the Slogger, and Mr. Casey was left alone in the moonlit yard.

There, indeed, Mr. Casey remained, looking up at the little garret window with great courage, until the moonlight began to shape Mrs. Mulligan's aged face against the panes ; the sounds from the stables assumed mysterious significance, and the deepening shadows in the corners seemed to become a rendez-

vous for hundreds of watchful eyes. At length, when a drunken man actually reeled against the gate in the far wall, Mr. Casey fled indoors.

Despite his reason, which told him to go back to the dancing room and show himself, he crept down the passage to Mr. Munro's private room, and, entering, closed the door cautiously behind him. Mr. Munro was seated at the fireplace, lying back in an easy chair and sucking at a huge black cigar. Near him stood the Slogger, laboriously counting some sovereigns in his great palm. When Mr. Casey entered, the other men started violently and looked round.

"It's only me," said Mr. Casey. "Well, O'Neil, are you satisfied?"

"It's all right now," returned the Slogger, sliding the coins into his breeches pocket. "I'm goin' to get dead dhrunk."

"Mind no one sees you," said Mr. Casey, "and lis'en to me before you go."

Passing round to the opposite side of the table, he stretched a forefinger towards the Slogger's heavy face and fixed his wandering gaze with his sternest look.

"Where were you," asked Mr. Casey, "on the night of the thirteenth of Siptimber?"

"Aslape in the hay-loft," replied the Slogger, jingling the money in his pocket.

"Good! Now, one moment," said Mr. Casey. "You're on your oath. The halther's round your neck, an' it'll tighten if you're a fool. Was Mrs. Mulligan, to your knowledge, in a depressed state of mind—in low sperrits—for the past three or four days?"

"She was nivir betther," answered the Slogger, in a surprised tone. "As gay as an ould lark."

"You're choked already!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, whilst Mr. Munro turned in his chair to gaze reproachfully at the Slogger. "The halther's gettin' tighter an' tighter because you're a fool. Answer the question: Was Mrs. Mulligan in low sperrits for the past few days? Yis or no?"

"Yis," replied the Slogger doggedly.

"Good!" observed Mr. Casey, relieved. "Did she state in your prisence that she wished she was dead?"

"No," replied the Slogger.

"She did!" said Mr. Casey menacingly.

"She did," repeated the Slogger submissively. "Is that all now?"

"That all? No. Wait a minute," said Mr. Casey, arresting the retiring steps of the witness with a levelled forefinger again. "Somethin' sthrikes me. Did Mrs. Mulligan ask you for somethin' to pisin rats with up in her garret?"

With his one eye staring stolidly at the questioner, the Slogger shook his hard round head.

"She did!" exclaimed Mr. Casey emphatically.

"She did," repeated the Slogger.

"An' you gave it to her?" suggested Mr. Casey softly.

"I gev it to her," returned the Slogger, with an air of perfect truth.

"That'll do. You may go down," observed Mr. Casey, taking up his coat tails and seating himself with a sigh of relief, as the Slogger finally turned and lurched from the room.

For some moments, after the departure of their

confederate, the two men sat in gloomy silence. Mr. Munro smoked heavily and Mr. Casey—one hand clenched on the arm of his chair—stooping forward, gazed with hot eyes at the tinsel roses in the grate.

"He's larned his lesson well," remarked Mr. Munro, breaking silence at length, and speaking in melancholy voice.

"He'll hang for it!" returned Mr. Casey.

Taking the cigar from his lips, Mr. Munro gazed with startled face across at his friend.

"The youngest barrister on circuit," observed Mr. Casey bitterly, and striking his hand on his knee, "would hang him before he'd bin five minutes in the dock. Alibi! The fool doesn't know the manin' of the word. But what does it matther if Slogger O'Neil is hanged? It's you I'm thinkin' of."

"Me?" exclaimed Mr. Munro, dropping the cigar on his boots and turning ashen with fright.

"Ay, you," returned Mr. Casey, gloomily. "He'll blundher you into it. That's what I'm afeard of. He'll put the halther round your neck, too."

"Don't say that!" protested Mr. Munro, quaking in his chair. "For God's sake, don't say that! I'd rather die any death than die on the scaffold. It's sad an' sorry I am you ivir put it into his head."

Instantly starting to his feet, Mr. Casey gazed indignantly at the terrified face of the Innkeeper.

"What d'you say?" he exclaimed. "I put it into his head? What did I put into who's head? What are you dhramin' about?"

Mr. Munro, having stared in a bewildered manner

up at his friend, sank back moaning in his chair and beat his weak hands against his knees.

"It's done now," he wailed. "An' I was thinkin', if he blundhered me into it he might blundher you into it, too."

Mr. Casey resumed his seat, but not with the same defiant manner.

"I'm able to take care o' myself," said he, forcing a short laugh. "Fifty people saw me all this evenin' dancin' an' enjoyin' myself. D'you think, gentlemen of the jury, that this rispectible man would be so callous at such a time? Heaven forbid!"

Mr. Munro listened to this with some surprise and not a little admiration.

"You're a clivir man, Tim," said he. "But, bedad, it's a bad business for all of us."

Again there was a long, mutual silence. Mr. Casey rose to pour out two large tumblerfuls of raw whisky, which both men drank; then, sitting down again, bent forward to strike Mr. Munro on the knee.

"We'll have to get rid of him, Johnnie," said he, significantly.

"Rid o' who?" asked Mr. Munro, turning his weary eyes on him.

Mr. Casey wakened up his tired companion by striking a hand fiercely on the table.

"The Slogger," he explained. "Out o' the counthry or out o' the world he must go before twinty-four hours are up."

At first Mr. Munro agreed to this, then protested against it; finally began to cry and accuse Mr. Casey of leading him into a trap.

There were angry words, followed by reconciliation and more raw whisky. Meanwhile the dancing and merriment went on without cessation, and the hours of the night for those who were enjoying themselves passed too swiftly away. The grey morning broke to find the two men still seated gloomily together, and the dancing over. Presently Mr. Casey, looking at his friend, saw him asleep. Rising then he went softly to the door, out to the passage, and looked up and down. Three or four men were lying asleep in the hallway, and beyond the open space of the market square looked raw and cold in the early morning light. He stole back, shivering, with chattering teeth, to the cheerless room, and, stretching himself on a couple of chairs, with his head on his arm, fell into a restless slumber.

Both sleepers were awakened by the sudden opening of the door followed by wild shrieks. Starting up, they confronted Miss Kate Munro, who stood before them with wild eyes and dishevelled hair in her morning wrapper.

"Mrs. Mulligan——" she cried. "Father! Mrs. Mulligan is——"

"Whisht!" shouted Mr. Casey in a frenzied voice, the recollection of the horrors of the night rushing upon him. "Don't say the word, Katie. Is—is she dead?"

"No!" cried Kate. "But she's gone! She's not in her room. She's not anywhere! I can't find her high up or low down!"

The two men simultaneously turned to gaze into each other's terror-stricken faces, and Kate looked at them excitedly.

"Gone!" they repeated.

"She's gone!" exclaimed Kate. "I of'en thought she'd wandher away agin. Now she's gone. Gran'-aunt's gone!"

Putting her hands to her face she burst out in fresh sobbing, and rushed away while the two men remained staring speechlessly at one another. Suddenly Mr. Casey gripped his companion by the sleeve.

"Come out with me to the hayloft," said he in a low voice. "The Slogger's made a mess of it. He's taken the body away an' buried it. Now there's no escape for you or him!"

They went out to the stableyard, and, entering one of the stalls, mounted a ladder up into the hayloft, their terror giving them an agility denied to their ordinary powers.

The Slogger was lying on his back in a heap of straw fast asleep, with his mouth wide open, snoring loudly, and two black empty bottles lay either side of him. Bending down, Mr. Casey shook him by the shoulder, and Mr. Munro kicked him in the legs. At last, when they succeeded in awakening him, he sat up and stared stupidly from one to the other.

"What have you done with Mrs. Mulligan?" whispered Mr. Casey fiercely in his ear.

The Slogger gasped, rubbed his eyes, tried to shake himself free, and lay down again. Mr. Casey now struck him violently in the chest and repeated his question.

The Slogger sat up again and there was an angry crimson mark across his beetled forehead.

"I was aslape in the hayloft," said he, glowering

at Mr. Casey, "an' she was in low sperrits an' wanted the rat pisin to pisin rats."

"What did you do with the body?" asked Mr. Casey, in an awful whisper.

"I did nothin' to it," replied the Slogger, with dangerous ferocity. "You lave me alone, or I'll do somethin' with you."

As he spoke, he reached forward for a hay fork, but Mr. Casey, kicking it aside, made for the ladder, down which he was hastily followed by Mr. Munro.

CHAPTER XX.

THAT TERRIBLE TUMBLER.

NEITHER the grey stones in the broad stableyard or the night damp rising in a mist from the roofs above them were greyer than the faces of the two men as they stood there, gazing conscience-stricken at each other. Their gaze wandered from the moss-crowned outer wall, to the little garret window close to the roof.

" I nivir felt so cowld in my life ! " said Mr. Casey, his teeth audibly chattering. " I'm so cowld that a gallon o' whisky wouldn't warm me ! "

" An' I fale a mighty quare tightness about the neck," groaned Mr. Munro, putting his trembling fingers to his throat. " I'll go inside."

" We'll go up an' look at the state of the room, anyhow," suggested Mr. Casey. " An' whativir you do, don't bethray, by word or look, that you were the instigathor of the crime."

" Me the instigathor ! " exclaimed Mr. Munro.

He turned indignantly to look at his companion, but Mr. Casey was already walking quickly towards the back door. So Mr. Munro, feeling at his throat again, and giving one or two suffocating coughs, followed.

The hall and stairs looked cold and empty as they went up, but there was a murmur from the kitchen, and the sobbing of Kate in a back room, which told them that the news had begun to spread.

Mr. Casey was the first to mount the little ladder and push open the door of the garret. Entering, he stood staring at the bed, whilst Mr. Munro, reluctantly following, stood behind him, stooping to avoid knocking his head against the sloping ceiling.

"There was no sthruggle here," remarked Mr. Casey, in a low, surprised voice, pointing to the bed; adding, with a look round: "Nor any sign of sthruggle about the place that I kin see."

The bedclothes had been turned back and the pillows smoothed out. A cloak, skirt and bonnet hung on pegs at the foot of the bed.

"Why should there be a sthruggle," explained Mr. Munro remorsefully, "whin the poor ould crature was dead before he carried her out?"

The first gleam of hope which had stirred in Mr. Casey's mind at sight of the orderliness of the place died out at these words.

"At any rate," said he, pointing to the tumbler, which still stood on the little round table at the bedside, "take that glass an' put it in your pocket, an' get rid of it at the first opportunity."

The words were scarcely spoken when Mr. Munro, stretching his long arm from behind his companion, snatched the tumbler and began to stuff it carefully down into his breast pocket.

"No! On second thoughts," said Mr. Casey,

nervously holding out his hand, "I'll take charge of that tumbler myself. You're not bright enough, Johnnie. You'd go about the place all day an' nivir think of desthroyin' it."

"Whativir way you like," said Mr. Munro wearily.

Having put the tumbler into his own overcoat pocket, Mr. Casey had another look round, stared at the bed again, and began to scratch his cheek with a perplexed air.

"I don't see her stick," said he, "an' I don't see her best satin gown."

"Sure," said Mr. Munro, again damping his companion's hope, "the Slogger took thim to give the iday that she's gone away of her own accord. There's more in the Slogger than you think, though he's only one eye."

"But stay a momint," observed Mr. Casey, putting a hand out to detain the other, who was turning gloomily towards the door. "Whin he lifted the corpse out o' bed, did he put the table an' glass back agin? That's a thing I don't undherstand."

"I sippose he did," replied Mr. Munro, with profound gloom.

"She's gone, anyhow," said Mr. Casey.

"But where has she gone to?" asked a fresh voice, and Mr. Munro instantly fell back against Mr. Casey, sending the latter staggering a step back into the interior, as they saw the face of Mr. Pepper in the doorway. He was in pyjamas, and had evidently turned hastily out of bed, his eyes being still heavy with slumber.

"You gev me a bit of a fright, sir," said Mr.

Munro apologetically; then, recovering himself, "Ay, troth, the ould woman's gone, sir."

As Mr. Pepper came into the garret Mr. Casey gave Mr. Munro a warning thrust with his elbow in the ribs. Having looked at the bed, around the room, and at his companions, Mr Pepper stepped back towards the ladder.

"We're rather crowded here," he observed.

They came out without remark. Mr. Munro faced the window in the lumber room; Mr. Casey, folding his left arm over his chest and holding his chin with his right hand, solemnly shook his head.

"It's not possible," said Mr. Pepper, now fully awake, "that she has run away?"

"It looks like it," answered Mr. Casey slowly.

"But, why should she?" inquired Mr. Pepper, staring from one to the other. "What was she afraid of?"

"It's my belafe," remarked Mr. Munro, steadily gazing through the window, "she's gone an' made away with herself."

At that suggestion, Mr. Casey, assuming a very suspicious air, looked for a moment steadily at the back of the Innkeeper's head; then raised his eyebrows significantly at Mr. Pepper, who thrust his hands into his pockets and knit his brows.

"Heaven forbid!" said the latter. "That would mean a lot of trouble to me."

"Why, sir," observed Mr. Munro, facing round impressively, "wouldn't the money go straight to Mrs. Munro in that case?"

At this Mr. Casey gave a short cough to attract Mr. Pepper's attention, and stared again with undisguised suspicion at Mr. Munro.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pepper, when he had looked again from one to the other. "I suppose so. It would mean a long delay, anyhow."

Conscious that he had spoken too hastily, Mr. Munro turned to the window again, but had scarcely done so when he uttered an exclamation of surprise, and, seizing Mr. Pepper by the arm, dragged him to his side.

"Look, sir!" he exclaimed, pointing towards the stables. "What's that man lookin' out there for? D'you see him? There he is agin! The Slogger! What's he lookin' out of the hayloft up at the garret winda for?"

They saw the Slogger at the door of the hayloft, gazing with heavy face up towards the garret. They remained in silence watching him, and saw him draw back as if in fear of being observed, then stealthily peer out again. This occurred several times. Then Mr. Pepper, turning away, shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know what you mean," said he. "Surely you don't suspect foul play? What object would that poor man have in getting rid of Mrs. Mulligan?"

"I dunno," replied Mr. Munro, turning, but looking on the floor. "Only his ways seemed suspicious to my thinkin'. Maybe, he knows more about the disappearance of Mrs. Mulligan than anyone else. Anyhow," he added abruptly, hurrying past the others, "I must go down an' look afther the house."

He went out, followed by the concentrated frown of Mr. Casey, and was scarcely gone when the

latter gazed significantly at Mr. Pepper's troubled face.

"I don't like that," observed Mr. Casey mysteriously. "There's somethin' sthrange about that."

"About what?" asked Mr. Pepper, impatiently.

Mr. Casey surveyed his companion with a look of surprise.

"About Misther Munro's manner," he explained. "Why was he in such a hurry to find out whether his wife would get the fortune or not? An' why," he added, emphatically, "did he want to throw the guilt on that one-eyed rascal out there in the hayloft?"

"Guilt?" exclaimed Mr. Pepper, starting. "Then you, too, suspect foul play?"

Mr. Casey raised his hand, then transferred it to his bosom and shook his head.

"God forbid!" said he. "Perhaps I spoke too hastily; for, to tell the truth, I was fond of the poor ould woman. I pitied her from the bottom of my heart, an' the mere thought of any wrong bein' done her upsits my nerves."

"Oh, it is ridiculous to have such suspicions!" said Mr. Pepper, with another shrug. "Who would hurt the old lady? With what object?"

"Still," observed Mr. Casey, musingly, feeling his chin and looking down, "it's quare enough, too, that one-eyed villain starin' out like that."

"There's nothing wonderful in that," said the other. "He has heard that she has gone. Hundreds of people will come and stare up at her window when they hear she has gone. At all events, let us go and interview this fellow."

"Capital iday!" exclaimed Mr. Casey loudly, as he followed the other out. "We must probe this matther to the bottim!"

He felt more confident now, since it was apparent that the other had no suspicion of him, and he had skilfully managed to throw a cloud over Mr. Munro and the Slogger. As he went out, attempting to swagger down the stairs, he repeated the recent conversation over and over in his mind, weighing the value of every word, in case it should have to be repeated in a court of justice. When they were out in the stableyard, Mr. Pepper went straight towards the stall, Mr. Casey following close behind and striving to look at ease.

"Hullo there!" shouted Mr. Casey, looking up. "Are you there, O'Neil?"

There was a rustling of straw, heavy breathing, and presently the sinister face of the Slogger, who was on his knees, looked down at them with baleful glance.

"What's the matther?" he asked hoarsely.

"Where were you last night?" inquired Mr. Casey very sharply, "from the hour of ten o'clock? That's the time," he added in a low voice to his companion, "that Mrs. Mulligan went to bed."

"Where was I?" replied the Slogger. "Where shud I be but up here fast aslape?"

Turning, Mr. Pepper looked at Mr. Casey, intimating by raising his eyebrows that he was satisfied.

"Then," said Mr. Pepper, looking up at the Slogger, "you don't know anything about the disappearance of Mrs. Mulligan?"

There was silence, the Slogger staring down with perplexity at the speaker.

"Come, sir," cried Mr. Casey sternly, "answer the question."

"Bedad," returned the Slogger, vindictively, "you know more about it nor I do!"

The words fell with such unexpected force on Mr. Casey's brain, that he reeled and turned deathly pale. Then, collecting himself and shaking his fist, he poured forth such a torrent of violent language that the Slogger crept out of sight, and they heard him crushing down into the straw.

"Didn't I tell you he was a villain!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, still choking with rage. "To dar' throw suspicion on me! Nobody but a black-hearted villain dar' do such a thing. Nobody but——"

"I wouldn't worry about it if I were you," observed Mr. Pepper in amazement, as he surveyed his companion's writhing features. "It was only his way of saying that he was as innocent as yourself."

Checking himself in a fresh torrent of invective, Mr. Casey conquered his wrath, as he recognized in these words that Mr. Pepper still had no suspicions.

"Of coorse, I'm a fool," said he laughing—a trifle hysterically. "That's the rale manin' of it. But I wouldn't have hurt a hair on Mrs. Mulligan's grey head."

"Well, I don't see what you could gain by doing so," remarked Mr. Pepper, turning towards the back door. "Anyhow, we've got to find the old lady. That's all. She may have run away, or she may have only gone out for a walk!"

"Ay, troth," assented Mr. Casey, with assumed hopefulness. "It may be nothin', afther all."

"The only worry is," explained Mr. Pepper, his hand on the back-door latch, "we've got to look for her."

"That's all," remarked Mr. Casey, cheerfully.

"And, of course," continued the other, as he entered the passage, "if she doesn't turn up before evening, I shall have to inform the police."

"You will, indade," said Mr. Casey, very faintly, as he followed him in.

At the foot of the stairs Mr. Pepper paused, shivering a little.

"It's a bit cold in this costume," said he. "I'll go up and change. You might let me know at once if you hear any news. And, by the way," he added, glancing back as he mounted the stairs, "that tumbler will fall out of your pocket if you don't take care."

Giving a ghastly smile, Mr. Casey rammed the tumbler still further down, with the lap of his pocket over it; then, when Mr. Pepper had disappeared, turned his attention to the bar. The door was locked here. He tried vainly to raise the windows in order to reach one of the bottles, which were in rows on the shelves; finally, after a thirsty glance from his hot eyes at the interior, he walked up the hall and turned into the smoke room, whence came the sound of sobbing. He found Mrs. Munro and Kate here, Mrs. Munro seated with her apron over her head and Kate with a handkerchief to her eyes.

"Where's Misther Munro?" asked Mr. Casey, as he entered.

Both started, Mrs. Munro whisking off the apron and disclosing a swollen face discoloured with muddy tears.

"Is that you, Misther Casey?" she exclaimed. "Isn't this terrible news intirely to think she'd go off like that, afther all the kindness we showed her! What'll we do, at all, at all now?"

"Well, Misther Pepper takes it coolly enough," returned Mr. Casey, looking about for something to drink. "I daresay, it'll be all right. Where's Misther Munro?"

"Sure, I dunno," replied Mrs. Munro. "I haven't seen him since yestherda. Where is your father, Kate agra?"

"I dunno, mother," answered Kate, sighing as she rose, and giving her damp eyes a final drying. "I'll go an' look for him."

"Ay, do," said her mother. "Won't you sit down, Misther Casey?" she asked, when Kate had retired, bursting into fresh tears in the hall. "You must be tired standin'. Since I heard the news an hour ago, sure the heart was put acrass in me. I dunno whether I'm standin' on my head or heels this minute."

Sitting down wearily, Mr. Casey again looked thirstily round the room.

"Have you anything in the nature of dhrink, ma'am?" he asked huskily. "I'm dead bate. I fale as if ivry bone in my body was roastin'. I was up the entire night."

Hastily rising, Mrs. Munro, selecting a key from the bunch at her waist, knelt down at a cabinet close to Mr. Casey's chair.

"Is that a fact?" she observed, still on her knees

and looking up at him. "Did you get no slape at all then?"

"Well, I was dancin' an thryin' to amuse the young people," replied Mr. Casey, feeling again the oppressive need of caution. "I did get a bit of a slape, but not much. Anything you have—whisky, brandy, wine—anything!"

She rose with a large black bottle having a loosened cork, and looked from the table to the mantelpiece.

"Now, that's a quare thing," she remarked, "there's not a glass in the place! But, sure, I see a tumbler there in your pocket, an' here's the bottle."

Alarm once more overcoming his jaded brain, Mr. Casey started to his feet and looked down at his side-pocket, over which the rim of the tumbler was protruding. He extended a hand to Mrs. Munro.

"Nivir mind glasses," said he, seizing the bottle from her fat hand. "I'm too thirsty."

Uncorking the bottle, he put it to his lips and the liquid gurgled down his parched throat; then he paused to cough and began again until he had almost finished the contents, Mrs. Munro meanwhile standing by, watching the performance with admiration and astonishment.

"Bedad, it's rale thirsty y'are!" said she, sitting down and spreading her fat hands on her knees. "But, sure, I sippose this business about Mrs. Mulligan has worried you, too. D'you think she'll come back to us?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Casey, working his lips together and gripping the bottle in both hands. "I've no

doubt she will. But, afther all, ma'am," he turned to her with a cunning look, " maybe, it might be as well she's dead an' gone ! "

Mrs. Munro threw up her hands in shocked protest.

" Don't say that ! Don't say that ! " she exclaimed. " Sure, wouldn't it mane the loss of millions to us ? "

" That's not Misther Pepper's iday," observed Mr. Casey, drawing nearer and placing a hand on her knee. " He says the money'd go direct to you."

" The Lord bless us an' save us ! " said Mrs. Munro, moving confidentially close to him. " You don't say so ! "

Finishing the bottle, Mr. Casey handed it to her and drew the back of his hand across his mouth.

" It's thrue as gospil," said he. " An' now, lis'en t'me. You know me well. Am I honist ? Am I above boord ? If, in my journalistic capacity, I hit out sthrong an' hard, am n't I dacint an' kind in my heart of hearts ? "

Hanging her head, Mrs. Munro idly ran her fingers round the neck of the black bottle.

" Indade," said she, " I belave you're a rale good man an' no mistake ! "

" Thank God for that ! " exclaimed Mr. Casey, suddenly rising, seizing her hand and kissing it whilst tears rolled down his cheeks. " Now I know I have a thrue frind ! An' if anything should happen to Johnnie, I'll take his place with a heart an' a half ! "

" Musha, it's rather soon," said Mrs. Munro,

the colour rising as high as her eyes, " to be lookin' so far into the future."

" It may not be so far," observed Mr. Casey, sitting back, but still holding her hand. " The divil thravels fast whin he's got a bad job in hand."

She had turned towards him in astonishment at this singular remark when the door was flung wide and Kate rushed in.

" Father's not to be found anywhere ! " she exclaimed. " I've bin searchin' for him all over the place."

They both started up.

" Were you in the stableyard ? " asked her mother.

" I sent Mary Ann out an' she came back," replied Kate excitedly, " an' said there was no one there but the Slogger snorin' in the hayloft."

With troubled eyes Mrs. Munro turned to Mr. Casey, whose pallid features were nervously working.

" Are you sure," said he to Kate, " you sarched the house from top to bottim ? "

" Indade I did," answered Kate ; " even Misther Pepper's rooms. I wouldn't have gone there," she added, dropping her eyes, " only he was out."

They remained silent for a moment until Mr. Casey said again :

" You're sartin you sarched every place ? "

" Except the cellar," replied Kate. " Of coorse, I wouldn't think of lookin' for him there."

" Hould on a minute," said Mr. Casey. " I'll go an' investigate there. He may have taken a little too much an' you nivir kin tell what some min'll do undher them sarcumstances. He might

have thought he was goin' up to bed. I'll go an' look for him, anyhow."

Hurrying out, Kate following him, he went down to the kitchen, where he procured a lamp from Mary Ann. Then he went up again and along a dark, narrow passage, holding the light whilst Kate and Mary Ann kept close to him. When he opened the door of the cellar the sudden draught of cold, moist air made the flame of the lamp jump and glare. He stepped back a moment to shade it with his hand ; then, with great caution, descended the stone steps into the dark cellar. There were barrels around the walls and iron hoops about the floor. Long cobwebs covered with dust stretched across the ceiling. Up to this, excitement had steadied Mr. Casey's nerves. Now his hand began to tremble, and he hastily gave the lamp to Mary Ann, who turned it about in all directions. Kate peered down at them from the door.

" He's not here," said Mr. Casey, with a gasp.

" Whisht ! " exclaimed Mary Ann. " What's that ? "

All listened, and as Mary Ann held up the lamp, it made Mr. Casey's face look like that of a corpse. They heard a long, prolonged snore.

" That must be father ! " exclaimed Kate excitedly, from the doorway.

Advancing in the direction of the sound, Mr. Casey found Mr. Munro lying behind a barrel in the furthest corner, with his back against the rough stone wall and his chin low on his breast. His hands were lying, palm upwards, at his sides, and his shirt had been torn open at the throat. Mary Ann shook him and shrieked at him, and Mr. Casey

kicked him about the legs. Finally, raising his face, he gazed stupidly at the light and said:

"Is her corpse found yit?"

He would have sunk back into his stupor again, but once more they hustled and shrieked at him until they got him on his uncertain feet and pushed him towards the doorway. Suddenly he drew himself up.

"Don't sind for the polis!" he yelled, and tumbled in a heap at the bottom of the steps.

Kate came now to the assistance of the others and they managed to force Mr. Munro up the stone steps. In the dark passage Kate took him by one arm and Mr. Casey by the other, leaving Mary Ann to close the cellar door.

"Don't sind for the polis!" gasped Mr. Munro, as they helped him along. "It was Casey done it!"

"He's mad dhrunk," said Mr. Casey across to Kate. "The dhrink has turned his brain. We must get him up to bed."

With the assistance of Mrs. Munro, who now appeared, they got him upstairs and flung him on the bed. Then Mr. Casey, wiping his damp brow with his sleeve, said that he would go home and rest. As he passed out, Kate stopped at the door and handed him the tumbler.

"This dhropped out of your pocket," said she.

He smiled a white smile as he thanked her, muttering something about it being of no importance, and he took it and thrust it once more deep in his pocket.

The front door of the Inn was now open for the day, but there was no one in sight, as Mr. Casey, with trembling limbs and throbbing temples,

staggered blindly down the street. As he passed the police station the sergeant came to the doorway and wished him good-morning.

Halting before him, Mr. Casey gazed at him without speaking, wondering if anything was yet known officially concerning Mrs. Mulligan.

"You're havin' great times up at the 'Horse an' Car,' Misther Casey," said the sergeant smiling. "I hope Mrs. Mulligan'll soon take herself off, for the town's turned completely upside down."

"Ay, thrue for you, sergeant," observed Mr. Casey; then, taking off his hat and looking at the sky: "It's a fine, cool mornin'."

"It's all that," returned the sergeant, adding: "You'd betther be careful of that tumbler, Misther Casey, or it'll fall out of your pocket."

Mr. Casey looked down at his pocket and began to fumble at the tumbler, muttering that it was nothing of any importance.

"May I look at it a momint?" asked the sergeant.

Mr. Casey instantly felt that his doom was sealed, and his hands shook as he forced up the tumbler and handed it over.

"I'm right!" exclaimed the sergeant triumphantly holding it up to the light.

"Wha—wha—what's the matther?" gasped Mr. Casey, reeling to the wall and putting out a hand to support himself.

The sergeant tapped the tumbler with his knuckles until it rang.

"It's rale Watherford glass!" said he enthusiastically. "You'll nivir get the like o' that made nowadays. That's worth havin', Misther Casey.

There's nothin' to bate the ould Watherford glass made with the help of the silver sthrand of Tramore! It's a mortal pity they gave up makin' it."

Then with the air of a connoisseur, he held it up again to gaze admiringly through it.

"But what are them stains on it?" he asked, and Mr. Casey began to dig at the wall behind him with his nails. "It'll want a good washin'." The sergeant smelt it, making a grimace as he handed it back. "It's worth presarvin', anyhow," he added, "for there's no glass to bate the ould Watherford glass. You kin throw that tumbler about now on the pavemint there, an' it's a hundhred to one it woudn't get a crack in it. Be careful of it, Misther Casey! It's worth keepin'."

Having vainly attempted to fumble back the tumbler into his pocket, Mr. Casey held it in front of him, as he nodded to the sergeant and crossed the street. A little further down he entered the office of the *Flashlight* and, having carefully closed the front door, hurried through the office, out into the yard and dashed the tumbler into fragments against the wall.

The news of Mrs. Mulligan's disappearance spread rapidly in the forenoon and quicker throughout the day. People stood in groups discussing it, and the "Horse and Car" was crammed. As Mrs. Mulligan did not return that day or the next, placards were posted up all over the town and the countryside, offering a reward for information as to her whereabouts. The police, aided by detachments of amateur detectives, searched the district in every direction, and her description was published

far and wide, whilst a special watch was set on all outgoing steamers.

At the end of the week a particular edition of the *Flashlight* appeared, entitled, the " Mrs. Mulligan Issue." In a leader Editorial, Mr. Casey wrote as follows :

" It was with profound grief and horror that We learned of the mysterious disappearance of Our famous Townswoman, Mrs. Mulligan. It was Our proud privilege to have been on terms of close friendship with this gifted woman. Her sudden rise to fame and fortune had brought no access of haughtiness or pride to her honest, simple nature. It is no exaggeration to say, that of late We learned to love and respect her as Our second mother. We found her dowered in many ways, apart from the mere question of filthy lucre. We found her kind and gentle to a degree, and fascinating in her conversation, which was replete with unexpected flashes of wit tempered by lapses into tender pathos. We mourn her temporary absence as a Son bereft of a dear maternal companion. We implore Our clever police force to leave no stone unturned to unearth the melancholy mystery of her disappearance. We beg Our generous townspeople to assist the police in their laudable efforts, by every means in their power. Until She is found and restored to her fond and distracted relatives Carrigmore will mourn in deepest sorrow, and We, Ourselves, shall not cease to lament the absence of Our most dear and valued friend."

CHAPTER XXI.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MRS. MULLIGAN.

THE night had grown darker when James Donohue, leaving the Inn, walked slowly, and with bent head, homewards down the main street. He was approaching close to his own doorway when a strange figure suddenly stepped from the porch, confronted him, and said :

" Is that Misther Donohue ? "

He recoiled off the footway and stood open-mouthed, gazing at an old woman, who leaned on a stick and whose figure, despite the darkness of the night, seemed familiar. When she repeated her question he started, and exclaimed :

" Thundher an' turf ! It's Mrs. Mulligan ! "

Mrs. Mulligan thereupon gave an angry tap of her stick on the pavement.

" Will you hould your whisht ! " she said, looking fearfully up and down the street. " Come over here till I tell you ! I don't want another sowl to know I'm here."

He readily advanced ; and for a moment, her cunning old eyes scanned his frank, boyish-like face.

"Sure, what kin I do for you, ma'am?" he inquired. "You've only to command me."

"I know that," said she confidently. "That's why I've bin waitin' here for you. I know you're a good-hearted boy, an' you're the only person I could thrust. You wouldn't harm a poor ould crature like me!"

"Troth, I'd be a quare rascal to do you injury," returned James Donohue, stepping well on to the path beside her. "But, sure, what's wrong? What have they bin doin' to you?"

"What have they bin doin'?" she repeated harshly; then, in lowered tones, and with another scared look around: "Whisht, darlin'. That black-hearted thafe of the world, Slogger O'Neil, thried to pizen me! But catch a weasel aslape! I had one eye open an' saw him pourin' some stuff into the tumbler an' whin the murdherin villain snaked away, I flung whisky and all afther him, bad luck to him ivry hour an' day he rises up or lies down! But, honey jool," she clutched him by the sleeve, "I want you to bring me to some dacint people that'll let me rest for the night in pace an' safety; an', in the morn, I'll set out agin on my wandherin's with the help o' God. God knows, I'd rather be out thrampin' the high-roads, happy an' contínted, than be livin' with people that thry to pizen me in my ould age for the sake of a few dirty pounds!"

Having listened to this recital with staring eyes and open mouth, James Donohue looked down with deep commiseration at the poor, pathetic face upturned to his. Then, putting a hand to his brows, he considered a moment.

"Come with me," said he decisively. "I know people that'll be glad to give you a bed for the night an' won't hurt a grey hair on your head."

"May the blessin' of God light on you, achushla!" said she, "I wasn't desaved in you! People can't hide their carracters from an ould woman like me that's bin thrampin' the world up an' down all her life. But, honey, take me somewhere I won't be seen, for sure they'd only ketch me agin an' bring me back."

"Well, come along, I'll take you all right," observed James Donohue cheerfully, walking slowly past his own door. "You kape an' eye on me, an', if I can't get you a dacint lodgin', I'll be mightily desaved."

She said no more, but walked, sometimes beside him, sometimes a little behind, until they came to a break in the long row of houses and turned on the left up a long, tortuous lane-way full of ruts and heaps of household refuse. Near the end of the lane James Donohue paused, and, putting a hand on her shoulder, pointed towards the last gateway.

"That's the place," said he. "If you'll wait here a minute I'll go an' see what I kin do."

"God bless you, honey jool!" returned Mrs. Mulligan, "I'll nivir forgit your kindness. I'll stay here, avic, an' thry an' light the ould pipe, for it's dead I am for the want of a smoke."

He left her with the clay pipe in her mouth and heard her scratching a match against the stone-work of the wall. With some little difficulty he pushed open the small gate—which was closed from within by a plank, the lock being broken—and his

efforts were greeted with furious barking from the yard dog, who tugged furiously at his chain. James Donohue was soon in the yard, which was of triangular shape, the henhouse being against the back of the dwelling place, and, next to it, a shed containing old barrels and wooden cases. The kennel was between the sheds; and the dog made a violent attempt to get at the intruder's legs until James, softly calling his name, bent down and patted him into quietness. Then, going to the back door of the dwelling house, he rapped loudly with his knuckles and rattled the latch. He was not kept long waiting there, for the window in the second story was thrown up and a man in a nightshirt thrust out a bald head and stared down.

"What d'you want here?" asked the man.

"Misther Gallaher," returned James, looking up apologetically, "would you mind comin' down a minute? There's someone wants to see you. It's me, Jim Donohue."

"Is it you, Jem?" exclaimed Mr. Gallaher. "What's wrong? Has anything happened to Jack? Hould on now till I get on my throusers an' I'll be with you in a shout."

He pulled down the window, and, as the dog started barking afresh, James turned round and saw the dark, bent figure of the old woman leaning on her stick in the gateway at the lane. He stepped forward and patted the dog again; and was thus engaged when he heard the bolts of the back door withdrawn and Mr. Gallaher, in shirt and trousers, stepped into the yard, holding a lit candle.

"In the name of God, what's wrong, Jem?" asked Mr. Gallaher in trembling accents as he shaded the candle with his hand and threw the light on James Donohue's flushed face.

"There's no thrubble about Jack, sir," explained James. "But it's Mrs. Mulligan."

"Mrs. Mulligan!" gasped Mr. Gallaher. "What's wrong with her?"

"They've been thryin' to pizen her or something," replied James, glancing back towards the gate where the bent figure still remained motionless. "She's bin tellin' me some quare ramblin' story an' I dunno whether it's thrue or whether she's out of her mind or what. But she asked me to bring her where she could have a rest for the night as she's made up her mind to lave the Munros an' go out agin into the wide world."

After this explanation, which he delivered rapidly, James Donohue drew in his breath and blew it out again with an exclamation of relief.

"Glory be to God, that's mighty quare," observed Mr. Gallaher. "Where is she? Mrs. Gallaher 'll be glad enough, I warrant, to look afther her. Where is she, Jem?"

James Donohue made no reply but walked down to the gate and, in a low voice, invited Mrs. Mulligan in. She followed him, and, when she found the man of the house addressed as "Misther Gallaher" she gave a start of surprise and seemed inclined to retrace her steps.

"Don't be frightened of me or mine, ma'am," said Mr. Gallaher, surveying the figure in the black satin dress with deep respect. "All we've got to do is act like Christians an' give you a bed for the

night. You're free an' welkim to it an' you kin lave it whin an' where you plaise. Misther Donohue here has been tellin' me what you tould him, an' whativir you may think of us, ma'am, you may be sartin of one thing—we won't thry to pizen you, anyhow."

"Indade, I'm sure of that," returned Mrs. Mulligan in a wearied voice, taking the pipe from her mouth and thrusting it into her bosom. "I'd take it kindly of you, then, if you'd put me anywhere for a slape. I'm dead bate an' I don't care this momint what becomes of me. I only want somewhere to lay my head."

"Come with me, ma'am," said Mr. Gallaher, turning, "mind the step down there. Kin you see? Have a look to her, Jem."

With Mr. Donohue's assistance, and aided by her groping stick, she got past the difficulty of the step and found herself in the kitchen, where Mrs. Gallaher, who had heard some of the conversation from her bedroom window, stood in an old, patched dressing-gown awaiting her illustrious visitor under a glaring jet of gas.

"Has heaven heard the prayers," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher rapturously, "that kem from my heart by night an' day; has heaven heard them prayers at last?"

At sight of Mrs. Gallaher's tall, spare figure Mrs. Mulligan was again seized, momentarily, with the desire to go back. But she was too exhausted. Her head drooped.

"I only want somewhere to slape," she muttered, "somewhere to slape."

"An' it's my own warm, cosy bed you'll

have, alanna machree!" cried Mrs. Gallaher enthusiastically. "My own warm bed all to yourself an' a hot jar to your feet!"

"I think, maybe, you're sayin' too much," suggested Mr. Gallaher, mildly to his wife. "The poor, ould woman's not in the humour for talk, I'm thinkin'."

At this reproof Mrs. Gallaher burst into tears and wiped her eyes against the shoulder of her husband's nightshirt.

"Don't be vexed with me, Mike," said she, "I can't help it. The sight of her, comin' to me at last, straight from heaven, 's too much for me. The heart in my bosom's burstin' with joy though the tears are in my eye."

"Would you like anything to ate or dhrink, ma'am?" asked Mr. Gallaher, turning respectfully to the satin-robed old woman.

But she shook her head and gazed anxiously at James Donohue, who, at sight of her distress, felt that he had made a mistake in bringing her there.

"I'll have a hot breakfist for her whin she opens her eyes in the mornin'," said Mrs. Gallaher, rousing herself to action and taking the candle from her husband's hand. "Come up with me now, Mrs. Mulligan, darlin', an' have the slape that your heart craves for."

She led the way out of the kitchen as she spoke, and Mrs. Mulligan followed, gratefully leaning on the arm of James Donohue up the stairs. When they were in sight of Mrs. Gallaher's bedroom door James bent down to the grey head and whispered:

"Maybe I should have brought you somewhere else, ma'am?"

And Mrs. Mulligan replied wearily:

"You meant well, achushla. I don't blame you."

Then Mrs. Gallaher took sole charge of her unexpected visitor, brought her into the bedroom, helped to undress her, put her to bed, and, having placed a hot jar at her feet, kissed the old, wrinkled face and dropped a tear on the sunken cheeks.

Next morning, owing to pains in her bones, as she explained it, Mrs. Mulligan was unable to rise. All day long, and the next day and the next she remained in bed, suffering, whilst Mrs. Gallaher, incessant in her attention, made warm drinks and rubbed the old woman's arms and legs until her own were weary. On the fourth day Mrs. Mulligan was well enough to sit up and light her pipe; and towards evening, she expressed a wish to see Mr. Donohue.

"If he's to be found anywhere, I'll find him for you, mavourneen," observed Mrs. Gallaher with unabated enthusiasm. "I'll go downstairs now an' see about it. Are you comfortable, alanna?" she asked, turning at the door.

"I'll do, thank you kindly," replied Mrs. Mulligan, and Mrs. Gallaher, comforted by these words—the gentlest Mrs. Mulligan had ever vouchsafed—ran downstairs into the back parlour, where she found her son Jack mending a fishing basket.

"Where's Jem Donohue?" she asked, "Mrs. Mulligan wants to see him. I dunno for what. She wants him anyhow, an' he must be got."

"That ould woman's an infernal nuisance!" exclaimed Jack, throwing aside his basket. "Ivry-

one dances attindance on her. I may tell you now, mother, I think you damane yourself rubbin' at her ould carkiss."

"Jack," said his mother, "if our blessed Lord Himself washed the feet of a beggar, why shouldn't I rub the legs of a millionaire? It's time enough to be haughty, Jack, whin we kin afford it. What I want to say is this: I won't let her slip through my fingers now that I have her for the want of a little attention. Go an' find Jem like a good boy, an' make haste."

Sullenly Jack took his cap from his pocket, stuck it on his head and went out, while his mother sat down behind the door to rest and think. Jack had no difficulty in finding James Donohue, who was drinking at the "Horse and Car," listening to all the various theories concerning the disappearance of Mrs. Mulligan and the adventures of the amateur search parties who were scouring the country.

Mrs. Gallaher led James up to the room and accompanied him inside. The old woman, still sitting up and smoking her clay, was pleased at the sight of the big-framed, boyish-faced friend, whom she greeted heartily.

"I just wanted to say a word to you, Misther Donohue," she explained, adding with a side-glance at Mrs. Gallaher's eager, peering face over James's shoulder, "an' I'd like to say it to yourself with no one prisint."

"That's a broad hint to me!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher with affected playfulness. "Well, I'll lave you both alone an' welkim!"

When she was gone Mrs. Mulligan mysteriously beckoned James to come close to the bed. Leaning

forward and catching him with her clawlike fingers by the shoulder, she whispered eagerly in his ear :

" See if the door's shut, honey."

James Donohue nodded ; turned and walked to the door which was slightly open, but which was shut by someone outside as he approached. He returned to the bedside.

" Dhraw a chair over an' sit down," said Mrs. Mulligan, and she gave a few puffs at the pipe until he was seated beside her.

" I wanted you to tell me," she explained, " what they're sayin' about me over beyant."

" Well," began James Donohue, " they're all very much upset, indade, ma'am. Misther Munro's taken to the dhrink terrible—dhrinkin' himself into the horrors—an' wandherin' about like a loonatic. Mrs. Munro's in bed, sick ; an' Miss Kate is always cryin' an' lookin' about for you in the hope that you'll come back again."

" Poor Katie ! " said the old woman, and her impassive face softened a moment. " Ah, she has the rale good heart like yourself. But, for the rist of thim, I don't much belave in their cryin' an' wailin'. But, my son, lis'en t' me. I'm goin' back to thim ! "

James Donohue half rose in his surprise, then sat down again.

" Glory be to God ! " said he. " That'll be a great surprise for thim all an' a great relafe."

" A great relafe, sonnie ? " she repeated. " D'you raley think so ? "

" Well, they're all mortial sorry you wint away," returned James confidently. " There's no doubt about that at all."

"But, the Slogger?" suggested Mrs. Mulligan suspiciously.

"I nivir see him," said James. "He's always in or about the stables mindin' his work."

There was a pause, and Mrs. Mulligan sat smoking meditatively, the lamp on the far table throwing her huge and grotesque shadow on the wall.

"Sometimes," she observed, musingly, "I think it may have bin all a dhrame. Things have bin so quare about me of late that I shouldn't wondher if my mind was a bit upset. But whether it was a dhrame or not, I'll kape my eye on that blaggard O'Neil, for I nivir liked the looks of him. It's for Katie's sake I go back. But, see here, sonny"—she bent towards him again and put a hand on his shoulder—"don't say a word about it," she whispered; "I wouldn't have that woman here know of it or she'd be the death of me. I don't belave there's a sincare dhrop of blood in her body. I'll have to slip away without her knowin', so don't say a word. That's all, my good boy. I thank you kindly. You're a rale dacint lad, an' I won't forgit your kindness to the poor ould woman."

She gave him her hand, which he shook, and, bidding her good-day, he went away. Immediately outside the door he was met by Mrs. Gallaher, who put her arm in his as they went downstairs.

"What did she say to you, Jem?" she asked as they entered the parlour where Jack awaited them.

James Donohue stood perplexed before answering.

"Faith, she asked me not to tell," he stammered.

Stepping back, Mrs. Gallaher looked at him with pained surprise, and even Jack stared at him

with uplifted eyebrows until James became more and more confused.

"You wouldn't kape a saycrit from me, Jem?" said Mrs. Gallaher reproachfully.

Hanging his head, James Donohue remained silent.

"Surely you'll tell mother?" said Jack, even more reproachfully.

"Well, then," replied James desperately, "she wants to go back to the 'Horse and Car.' That's all."

"Nivir," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, "to be pizened and murdhered! Nivir, if I kin privint it!"

She immediately rushed upstairs to the bedside and seized Mrs. Mulligan's hand.

"You won't lave me!" she cried. "You don't want to go back to thim! Say you don't!"

Staring at her for a moment, Mrs. Mulligan shook her grey head up and down and muttered something about the "wakeness" of Mr. Donohue.

"Your blood's in my veins!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher hysterically. "My own grandmother was a Mulligan; I've as much right to you as thim. Don't lave me an' break my heart!"

"Who said I was goin' to lave you?" asked Mrs. Mulligan.

"James Donohue," replied Mrs. Gallaher, still holding tightly to the old woman's hand.

"He's dhramin'," returned Mrs. Mulligan. "The boy's dhramin'. I nivir said a word of the kind to him. But I fale drowsy an' I'd like to slape."

"Do, darlin', do!" said Mrs. Gallaher with ecstatic relief. "An' I'll turn down the lamp so

that it won't hurt your eyes. The thought of your leavin' me ud put me in my grave. I couldn't bear it, I couldn't ! "

Mrs. Mulligan had sunk down in the bed-clothes and closed her eyes ; and Mrs. Gallaher, having turned down the lamp, left the room with a mind only half satisfied.

CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. MULLIGAN'S GHOST.

NEXT day Mr. Gallaher was busy in the Stores arranging goods along the shelves, when, happening to turn towards the door in the act of lifting several saucepans, his eyes encountered those of Mr. Casey, who, with coat collar turned up, muffler round his throat and hands deep in his pockets, stared with enigmatic glare at Mr. Gallaher and remained motionless. Letting the saucepans drop to the floor, Mr. Gallaher, standing erect, continued to gaze at the editor, whose blanched face seemed more bloodless than before. There was mutual distrust in the minds of both men, Mr. Gallaher dreading lest Mr. Casey should have discovered the whereabouts of Mrs. Mulligan, and Mr. Casey, for his part, haunted by the fear that he was suspected, not only, indeed, by Mr. Gallaher, but everyone else, of foul play against the old woman. Both, therefore, felt the necessity of caution.

"Why, Misther Casey," exclaimed Mr. Gallaher, breaking silence first, "is that you or your ghost?"

Giving a shuddering start, Mr. Casey glanced fearsomely behind him.

"My ghost?" said he, with shaking voice.

"Ay, troth," observed Mr. Gallaher, advancing slowly towards the table. "I nivir saw you look so bad, sir. What have you bin doin' to yourself?"

"To myself?" repeated Mr. Casey, leaning his trembling figure against the counter near the front door. "I have bin doin' nothin' to myself."

"Well, indade, it's white an' thin you're lookin'," remarked Mr. Gallaher in his kindliest tones, contemplating the scared face and shrunken figure covered with the top hat. "I'm sorry to see you like that, sir. A precious life like yours isn't to be thrown away."

Mr. Gallaher was now leaning with folded arms on the counter, and on his broad, hale face there was a growing look of self-confidence as he noticed the other's shrinking manner.

"How d'you mane, throwin' my life away?" asked Mr. Casey. "My life's all right, isn't it? Is anybody goin' to take it, d'you think?"

"God forbid!" ejaculated Mr. Gallaher solemnly. "I was goin' to say it's too precious a life to be trifled with. The counthry, sir, not to spake of Carrigmore, can't afford to lose min of your brains. That's why, an' for your own sake, too, you ought to take more care of yourself."

Raising his hat, and somewhat reassured by these friendly words, Mr. Casey passed a hand across his troubled forehead to smooth out its deepened lines, and he sighed heavily.

"Until Mrs. Mulligan's found," said he, and Mr. Gallaher hastily turned his eyes away to look vacantly through the open doorway, "I'll not get

betther. The mysthery surroundin' her disappearance hangs heavy on me. Did you rade my latest Editorial ? "

" Indade, I did, sir," responded Mr. Gallaher heartily, " an' a betther bit o' writin' I nivir saw or heard of. I'm not aisily touched, but the beautiful way you spoke of the poor ould woman brought tears to my eyes."

" Is that the case ? " said Mr. Casey more cheerfully ; then, with renewed anxiety : " D'you think the people about here felt the truth an' sincarity of the sentiments I expressed ? "

" To be sure they did, to be sure ! " said Mr. Gallaher encouragingly. " Nobody but a person with the heart of a stone but would be touched by such language."

" Ah, well," observed Mr. Casey, sighing again and half turning his face aside, " it's a terrible sthrange mystery. Sarch parties are out night an' day ; the police all over Ireland are on the look out ; detectives have arristed dozens of ould women in the boats ; everything has bin done that human ingenuity cud suggest—even the Carrig has bin dhragged—but all, all of no avail ! "

These words, though expressed with deepest weariness and despair, had not the same effect on Mr. Gallaher as on the editor. Mr. Gallaher cleared his throat, looked down at the counter, then out of the doorway, and always in a vacant, dreamy fashion.

" It's sthrange, sartinly," he murmured.

" Sthrange ? It's terrible ! It's killin' me ! " exclaimed Mr. Casey, tapping his nervous fingers against his chin. " I'd give ten years of my life

to find her—to know where she is hidden—or done away with. I'd——"

He paused with a sudden violent start, and having looked all round the place, stared at Mr. Gallaher's bent head ; then, raising his face and looking up at the ceiling, remained so for several minutes sniffing the air.

"What's the matther, sir?" inquired Mr. Gallaher at last, moved by this strange behaviour.

"D'you smell nothin'?" asked Mr. Casey, in an affrighted voice.

Mr. Gallaher now gazed at him with assumed astonishment, for he, too, had become conscious of the powerful aroma of rank tobacco which began to pervade the place.

"Nothin', sir," he replied, "but the hams an' onions hangin' up here."

"Don't you," asked Mr. Casey, coming nearer him and stretching a trembling hand across the counter to seize his friend's arm, "don't you smell tibacco?"

"Maybe, Jack's havin' a cigarette in the back parlour," suggested Mr. Gallaher, turning pale with suppressed emotion.

"It's not cigarettes," gasped Mr. Casey, "it's—it's the tibacco she smoked—before—when—the tibacco——" He went on stammering in this fashion until Mr. Gallaher gave a forced laugh.

"You must be dhramin', sir," said he. "The divil a smell of tibacco I smell."

"Perhaps I am, perhaps I am," said Mr. Casey, with a groan. "My brain's bin quare of late. Whisht! What's that?"

Mrs. Mulligan upstairs had given one of her guttural coughs.

"I hear nothin'," said Mr. Gallaher resolutely.

"Didn't you hear—didn't you hear a cough? Her cough? Mrs. Mulligan's cough?" gasped Mr. Casey.

"The divil a cough I heard," declared Mr. Gallaher stoutly. "What's wrong with you at all, sir?"

Mr. Casey seized himself by the head with both hands.

"I—I don't know," said he wildly. "I thought I smelt a cough—thought I heard a smell—thought——"

Turning abruptly, he staggered out through the doorway, still holding his throbbing temples in his hands.

An hour later he was seated in Mr. Munro's little private room, the innkeeper being deep in a large armchair. On the table between the two men were decanters and glasses.

"Take another dhrink," suggested Mr. Munro, huskily.

"What's the good of it!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, thrusting his glass away with a grimace of disgust. "It doesn't do me any good. It may suit a man of your coorse fibre, but a man like me, that's all nerves, it only makes me worse. My mind's a hell on earth! If I could only find her! Find where that ruffian has buried her! If I could only tear the saycrit out of his black heart! If I could——"

"Don't be goin' on like that," protested Mr. Munro, turning his inflamed face round to locate his own tumbler. "What's the good of it? The

Slogger won't tell an' there's an ind to it. I've thried him over an' over agin. I've offered him a fifty-pound note, but he ayther doesn't know, or if he knows, he won't tell. It's my privit opinion he doesn't know. It's my privit opinion she was carried away by the fairies."

"The fairies?" repeated Mr. Casey in an incredulous voice.

Finishing his tumbler, Mr. Munro placed it upside down on the table and resettled his legs.

"Ay," said he. "There's more truth in thim stories than you think. Whin the best's said of her, she was an ould witch. Anyhow, it's my belafe they tuk her away."

"I wish I could think that! I wish I could belave that!" ejaculated Mr. Casey, in accents of despair.

"The polis can't find her," observed Mr. Munro, "the detectives can't find her, the whole counthry can't find her, an' the Slogger swears black an' blue he nivir laid a finger on her."

"Whisht!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, starting up. "What's that?"

There was a noise at the door as of someone falling against it.

Both men looked round.

"Sure that's nothin'," explained Mr. Munro, with a thick laugh. "Someone's fallen agin the doore. Everybody," he added, "is always fallin' agin the doore now."

Having listened a while, his eyes starting and breath short, Mr. Casey sat down again, still trembling.

"You'll put yourself into your grave before me,"

said Mr. Munro, with grim jocularity. "An' I'm dhrinkin' myself into it as fast as I can."

Mr. Casey sat in a huddled condition for some time, ruminating until he looked up and struck his weak hand on his knee.

"The Slogger must be got rid of," said he.

"How so?" asked Mr. Munro.

"Sind him out of the counthry," suggested Mr. Casey.

Laughing again, Mr. Munro began to hunt in his pocket for a cigar.

"I've thried that," said he.

"Well?" asked Mr. Casey.

"He won't go," replied Mr. Munro.

"Then poison him or cut his throat," said Mr. Casey desperately. "So long's that man's alive we're not safe."

"Do it yourself, if you like," observed Mr. Munro. "I've had enough of that kind of game. I'm goin' to dhrink myself blind now, night an' day, an' to the divil with ould Mrs. Mulligan an ivryone else."

Having lit a cigar, he proceeded to drink himself to death by pouring out a tumblerful of raw whisky and swallowing it in several gulps. Mr. Casey watched him in a lethargy of disgust, and, finally, taking up his hat went away without a word.

The evening was now closing in, the sky turning grey and the lamps in the coffee-room were already lit for the crowd of revellers who still made merry there every night. Holding his hat in his hand to allow the air to cool his burning temples, Mr. Casey had descended the steps of the Inn, and was already half-way across the Market Place when

he stood stockstill, with dropped jaw and eyes petrified in horror.

In one of the windows above Gallaher's Stores stood Mrs. Mulligan, gazing complacently towards the "Horse and Car." In another moment she had disappeared. Then, with a moan of anguish, Mr. Casey fled back to the Inn, fought his way through the hall, stumbled down the passage behind the bar, and bursting into Mr. Munro's room, roused the Innkeeper, who was fast asleep, with a terrific yell.

"I've seen her ghost!" cried Mr. Casey, violently trembling and gasping the words through whitened lips.

"Wha—what?" asked Mr. Munro, sitting up and grasping the sides of the chair. "What's matther?"

Seizing him by the shoulders, Mr. Casey, with an hysteric effort, raised him and shouted into his ear:

"Her ghost! Mrs. Mulligan's ghost!"

"Wh—where?" gasped Mr. Munro, turning as white as Mr. Casey, to whom he now held on with shaking hands.

"Come with me! Not a word. Come!" whispered Mr. Casey, and together they went out, down the steps and stood in the middle of the square, gazing at the window over Mr. Gallaher's Stores.

No one appeared there, though they stood fully five minutes holding on tightly to each other. But presently they heard the familiar stamping of a stick approaching, and then Mr. Casey fell against Mr. Munro, and Mr. Munro sank down upon the ground as Mrs. Mulligan tramped past them in bonnet

and black satin dress with her pipe in her mouth, unmoved by the wild reproaches hurled after her by Mrs. Gallaher from the doorway.

When the old woman entered the Inn some persons in the hall crossed themselves and others fell on their knees. At her approach the noise of the bar customers became hushed. She passed them all without remark, until she asked one of the girls who came out to the door of the bar to send Kate to her, and proceeded calmly upstairs to her own apartments.

An hour later Mr. Casey burst into her room, dragging the terrified Mr. Munro behind him. Mrs. Mulligan was seated in her familiar way on the steps of the ladder which led to her attic bedroom, and Kate was standing beside her.

"Clear the road!" shouted Mr. Casey, as if opposed by a crowd. "Where is she? Do I see her there? Do I see the light o' Carrigmore there, sittin' before me? Am I in a dhrame? Stan' back there, everyone! Casey had been bereft of her, Casey has had no sleep since she wint—stan' back there! This is Casey's welkim to her!"

Rushing to the ladder and taking off his hat, he bent forward and kissed Mrs. Mulligan on the near cheek. She made no sign of recognition, but took her pipe from her mouth a moment and spat into the corner. Then Mr. Casey, his eyes actually full of tears, fell back a pace, raised his hat and eyes, and struck himself with his left hand on the breast.

"I thank God!" he exclaimed, with deep solemnity, "that I have lived to see this! I'm not worthy of it. I'm only a poor editor, who

wrote about her with his heart's blood whin she'd gone an' left him desolate, whin she'd gone an' plunged the town o' Carrigmore into sackcloth an' ashes. Now I kin die. I'm willin' to go now. Munro, ordher my funeral now, if you like. I'm happy ! "

" I can't belave it ! " panted Mr. Munro, his back against the wall, gazing sideways with terrified eyes at the immovable old woman. " There's fairies in it. I can't belave it."

" Fairies ? " cried Mr. Casey, who seemed almost delirious with joy. " Go over there an' kiss her hand. Go over, Johnnie Munro, an' prosthrate yourself before the noblest crature God ivir made ! D'you hear me ? "

" It's fairies that's in it," babbled Mr. Munro, moving his hands about as if to disperse supernatural visitors.

" Arra, go out o' this ! " exclaimed Kate, as she tightened her apron and looked businesslike. " Don't be goin' on with your foolin'. Gran'-aunt wants to be let alone, an' I'm goin' down now to get her somethin' to ate."

" Blessid child ! " said Mr. Casey tenderly, turning towards her. " You are worthy of her. You have her swate, lovin' blood in your veins. Mrs. Mulligan," he added, speaking with profound respect, " you'll forgive me, I hope, if I same a bit quare. But you lift us—you wint away—I won't ask you why ? I'll only ask you one question. Did you ivir know me to be anything but a thrue an' warm frind ? Answer that."

" It's a great honour you do me intirely, Misther Casey," responded Mrs. Mulligan, smiling on him.

"But, sure, you're makin' too much of me altogither!"

For a moment Mr. Casey was unable to speak. He remained, staring at her with mouth agape.

"D'you hear that?" he shouted wildly. "She calls my frindship a great honour! Glory to God! This is a proud day in the life of Tim Casey. Did you hear her, Johnnie Munro? Did you hear what she said?"

Turning to the Innkeeper he danced before him, shook him, thrust his fingers into Mr. Munro's ribs and behaved like one bereft. But Kate, inspired by a significant wink from Mrs. Mulligan, bustled towards the two men, and repeating that her gran'-aunt wanted to be left alone, hustled them out of the room.

Together they went down one flight, turned to the left, and entered Mr. Munro's bedroom. Here, when the door was closed, Mr. Casey raised his hat again and heaved a long sigh of relief.

"It's the fairies done it," observed Mr. Munro, whose teeth chattered. "You naden't tell me it wasn't the fairies done it, because I know it was."

"You know it was?" returned Mr. Casey, with emphatic contempt, as he thrust his companion away from the cabinet where he was fumbling in search of a decanter. "Who are you? You miserable, white-livered, chicken-hearted crature! What right," he demanded, turning and looking scornfully at the shivering figure up and down, "what right have you to ixpress any opinion at all? Whin you got the deed o' darkness done, how did you behave? Like a blitherin', wake-kneed coward! Nowhere ud do you to hide your wake,

thrimblin' carkiss but down in the cellar among the rats an' spiders ! "

" You weren't so bould over it yourself, I'm thinkin'," observed Mr. Munro, with a flash of his old independence.

Mr. Casey burst into a scornful laugh as he poured the whisky into two tumblers. Then, as he laid down the decanter—which Mr. Munro was thirstily eyeing—he drew himself up to his highest, and swelling out his breast, struck it several times proudly with his hand.

" No, sir ! " said he. " There was nivir the ghost of a fear in that heart. I'm a man. My conscience was clear. I had nothin' to do with it. It didn't turn a hair on me."

" Well, she's back, anyhow, thank God ! " said Mr. Munro, as he reached for his tumbler.

" Ay, you made a nice mess of it, you an' your accomplice, Misther Slogger O'Neil," returned Mr. Casey, with increased contempt. " You an' your rat pisin."

" It was you put the rat pisin into my head," retorted Mr. Munro, when he had finished half his tumbler.

At this charge, Mr. Casey, for some moments, remained speechless with indignation. Indeed, he looked so dangerous, that Mr. Munro hastily backed round the corner of the cabinet, taking care, however, to bring his tumbler with him.

" You're not worth answerin ' ! " said Mr. Casey. " You're only a thraneen. I put it into your head ? You blitherin' ijit, didn't I sthrive to impress on you that if anything happened in the way of an accident—if she fell down the stairs an' broke her

neck—no blame could be attached to anyone? An' I tell you that now, too," he added more emphatically. "No more o' your rat pisin! An accident's an accident, an' that's all that kin be said about it."

"I won't have any more to do with it," stated Mr. Munro. "I want my glass o' whisky an' I want my cigar, an' that's all I want. Whisht! What's that?"

A great burst of cheering, followed by the blare of brass instruments, broke in upon their conversation.

"It's the people! The big-hearted people o' Carrigmore!" cried Mr. Casey excitedly; and when he had hastily finished his tumbler, he snatched up his hat. "They've come out in their thousands to welkim her back! I'll go an' show myself to thim."

The enormous crowd now massed in front of the Inn, headed by the band blowing their loudest, flanked with torch-bearers waving their brands and shedding clouds of sparks on the heads around them, greeted the appearance of Mr. Casey at an upper open window with a frantic cheer. Taking off his hat, he held it against his breast with his left hand and extended his right arm in the air. In this attitude he stood for a moment, smiling sweetly, and distinctly visible in the light of the flaming torches.

"People o' Carrigmore!" he cried, and there was a responsive yell of delight. "My noble fellow-townsmen, fellow-townswomen, and fellow-townschildren, I thank God that I have lived to see this hour, whin you, in the impulse of your

generous hearts, have poured forth here in your thousands to give welkim to the grand ould woman of Carrigmore. My frinds, in her name an' at her special request, I stand here to-night to jine my heart with yours ; in her name an' in mine, I thank you not once, not twice, but a thousand times ! For a brief space she tuk the light of her shinin' countenance from us. You and I, my frinds, were left sorrowing in darkness, not knowin' what to think, not knowin' where to look. It seemed as if she had flashed across our horizon like some brilliant meteor an' then vanished into space. But, my frinds, she has come back, she's here in the grand ould ' Horse an' Car,' she's upsthairs dhrinkin' her glass o' whisky an' wather an' smokin' her darlin' ould clay pipe. Ay, thank God, she's back agin with us ! Nivir agin to lave. I kin say no more. My heart's too full for words. I've only thried to ixpress to you the feelin's that have filled my bosum an' yours. Once more, in Mrs. Mulligan's name, I thank you over an' over agin for your magnificint welkim home ! "

This speech, which had been freely interspersed with cheers varied by some personal encounters on the outskirts of the crowd, was finished amidst the greatest burst of cheering which ever shook the windows of Carrigmore ; and, bowing his acknowledgments with great dignity, Mr. Casey gracefully withdrew.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BOMBARDING THE STORES.

THERE was an air of depression in the back parlour of the Stores, where, towards the close of the evening, Jack Gallaher and James Donohue conversed in subdued tones. Upstairs, the restless step of Mrs. Gallaher struck sharply through the confused murmur of the crowd around the Inn. The young men had been together for some minutes, both anxious and depressed, when they turned their heads at the sound of a soft footfall, and saw Mr. Gallaher creeping in, glancing fearfully over his shoulder towards the stairs.

" Boys," said he in a whisper as he sunk into a chair, " she's restless an' upset. I know it by the way she's walkin' about. She's always like that whin she's restless an' upset."

The two friends made no remark. They lapsed into silence, listening to the rhythm of Mrs. Gallaher's heels upstairs marking time through the hoarse hum of the crowd.

" In a way," continued Mr. Gallaher in subdued tone, " I'm glad the ould woman's gone. It was a reglar nightmare to me all the time she was in the house—nivir knowin' what was goin' to happen,

or whin they'd discover her whereabouts—an' then there'd be the divil to pay. For thim raisins, boys, I wasn't half sorry whin I found she'd taken Frinch lave."

"An' I nivir liked the iday," remarked Jack in equally lowered voice, "of mother dancin' attindence on her."

"I'm afeard," said James apologetically, looking from one to the other, "that I've bin the cause of it all. I shouldn't have brought her here at all."

"Sure, my boy," observed Mr. Gallaher, "you done it all for the bist. You thought you were doin' Mrs. Gallaher a good turn. I know that, I know that."

"In troth, that's just what I thought, sir," returned James feelingly. "But I was always something of a fool, and I put my fut in it."

"Well, you meant well, Jem," said Mr. Gallaher, slowly filling his pipe, and keeping his ears open to the restless pacing of his wife. "You meant well, an' there's no blame appertainin' to you in the matther. Don't let it dwell on your mind."

"I don't know what mother expected her to do," said Jack impatiently. "I wish to the Lord Mrs. Mulligan was dead an' buried, for she's brought nothin' but misery with her."

Mr. Gallaher was reaching forward to strike a match on the grate, but paused and looked round towards Jack, who was sitting on the window-sill drumming his heels against the wall.

"You've hit it now, Jack," said his father. "That was always her carracteristic."

He seemed to like this word, pausing again before

lighting his pipe to repeat it affectionately. When he had lit the pipe and leaned back to smoke, the two young men, looking at him, remained silent.

Presently Mrs. Gallaher came with a rush downstairs and burst into the room.

"She's gone now!" she cried, her eyes as wild as her voice. "She's gone now, and I hope, Misther Gallaher, you're proud of your handiwork."

Mr. Gallaher looked at her over his shoulder with startled face, and was about to make a remonstrance, when, hearing a short, significant cough from Jack, he said nothing.

"I've as much right to her as the Munros," cried Mrs. Gallaher, constantly tugging at the knitted shawl around her shoulders and chest, "for her own blood's in my veins. But what kin I do with a man that threw cowld water on all my plans? She's gone now, an' all is over."

"I don't see that, at all," said Jack, assuming a decided manner. "Kate has given me her promise. She won't go back on it."

"Isn't she goin' to London?" demanded his mother, turning sharply on him. "You may bid good-bye to her then. She'll have plinty to pick an' choose from there."

"Kate'll nivir go back on her word," said Jack, more emphatically. "Jem, you know her well. Isn't that gospil truth?"

"You kin swear by what she says," answered James Donohue, choking a sigh in his throat. "She'll nivir marry any man but you, Jack. On that I'd stake my life."

"Ay! Oh, yis! Talk to me now. Thry to

persuade me," said Mrs. Gallaher, wagging her head and setting her teeth hard. "I know that kind o' talk. I'm not to be fooled by the like o' that. She's goin', an' gone she'll be for ivir, thanks to the man that threw cowld water on me."

She had scarcely uttered these words in passionate spasms, when the hum of the crowd, rising in violence, burst into a roar and there was a fierce rattle of stones on the shutters of Gallaher's Stores. Jack instantly jumped down from the window-sill, James rose to his feet, Mrs. Gallaher started back—her eyes staring wildly in the direction of the fusilade—and Mr. Gallaher, sitting bolt upright, gripping himself by the knees, let his pipe fall unheeded from his lips as he stared aghast from one to the other. Again there was a furious shout, with cries of "Bring out the kidnappers!" quickly followed by another volley of stones.

"They're comin' to murdher me!" shrieked Mrs. Gallaher. "They're comin' to kill me at last! They'll break down the house an' thrample me to death!"

"Mother," protested Jack, "don't go on like that. They'll soon get tired."

"It sames to me," observed Mr. Gallaher with an heroic effort at quietude, "that they're bumbardin' the premises. That sames evident on the face of it. They're bumbardin' the premises."

His words were punctuated with another volley followed by the crash of glass. Rushing past his mother, Jack raced upstairs, the others remaining in amazed silence until his return.

"I've shut the shutthers," he explained with a short, fierce laugh as he re-entered. "They've

broken a pane or two. Jem, will you take a stick an' come out with me ? "

" Nivir ! " shrieked Mrs. Gallaher, jumping in front of him with outspread arms. " Let thim kill me—— But they won't kill my only child."

" Well, mother, don't go on like that," said Jack, gently thrusting her feverish hands from his chest. " They won't kill you. The man that'd lay as much as a little finger on you would appear before his Maker the next momint. There, now ! What's that ? "

Turning his head, he listened. Through the cries of " Kidnappers " came the hoarse voice of the sergeant : " Form up ! " and the tramp of disciplined men. The storm raged and broke, rose again, and rolled about ; but the stone throwing, after a few more scattered outbursts, ceased.

" It's ivident on the face of it," observed Mr. Gallaher, his face ghastly, " that the polis have arrived an' the bumbardmint is over."

Jack had crossed the room to his former seat on the window-sill, and James Donohue was standing with his back against the wall. Mrs. Gallaher was in the doorway, her face towards the hall, when she suddenly started and fell back before the figure of a woman in a dark-blue cloak whose face was hidden in a deep hood. The men sprung upright as the newcomer entered. She threw back the hood from her pale and startled face.

" Why, it's Kate ! " shouted Jack, hastening to her with hands held out.

" Then, they didn't get you, Jack ! " said Kate breathlessly. " I was afeard they'd get you. Thank God, you're all right ! "

As he put his arm round her and smiled, she clung to him, looking up into his face with streaming eyes.

"An' thank God," cried Mrs. Gallaher triumphantly, "for this proof an' sign of the love of a thrue girl's heart. I could live through years of sorra for this!"

"They got vexed whin gran'-aunt came back," explained Kate quickly to Jack, "whin they heard she'd bin here all the time. An' some were dhrunk an' started peltin' stones an' I ran round by the back lane to see if you were safe."

"Mrs. Mulligan came here," said Mrs. Gallaher, speaking loudly from her position near the door, "of her own free will. You know that, Jem?" she added, turning to James, who was close to her, his back against the wall. "Isn't that God's truth?"

"It is, ma'am," faltered James.

"Misther Pepper," continued Kate, still looking up at Jack, "has made up his mind that Mrs. Mulligan must go to London the mornin' afther the bazaar. He says he won't give her another hour. An' we're all goin' with her—father, mother, myself, an' Misther Casey."

"Then Jack may say good-bye to you for iver an' iver an' die of a brokin heart," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher in despairing voice, "unless you an' he could get married before you go."

"We couldn't get married in Carrigmore," said Kate. "There's not a priest here, or in the whole county, would marry us, because Mrs. Mulligan has declared against it."

"There's a place in Dublin called the Registhry Office," said Mrs. Gallaher. "Isn't there, Jem?"

"I belave so, ma'am," assented James, looking down at his boots to avoid seeing Kate in Jack's arms.

"An' you kin get married there laygilly an' honist," said Mrs. Gallaher. "Can't you, Jem?"

"I belave so, ma'am," muttered James.

"James says," declared Mrs. Gallaher triumphantly, "that if you an' Jack could go up to Dublin an' stay there for three or four days you could get married at the Registhry Office without askin' the lave of priest or bishop. That's what James says, an' he's as honist as the sun."

These words were uttered at the back of Kate, who continued to gaze earnestly up into Jack's eyes.

"I would lis'en to what Jem says," observed Mr. Gallaher, looking firmly round, "before I'd lis'en to the words of any man."

Kate gazed more entreatingly up at Jack; and Jack, after a moment's hesitation, said:

"That's a splendid iday!"

"But how could we get away?" asked Kate, hanging her head.

"Couldn't it be managed the night of the bazaar, Jem?" suggested Mrs. Gallaher, whose quick ears had caught the girl's words; and she turned to the young man, who stood against the wall, his face blazing red.

"I sippose it could, ma'am," he responded faintly.

"Jem says," proclaimed Mr. Gallaher, again triumphantly, "that if Kate had her box packed the night of the bazaar an' was ready, she could slip out an' Jack could have a car ready an' they could

dhrive straight to the railway station an' Jem ud give thim all the help in his power. That's what he says an' I lave it with yiz now."

"What d'you say, Jack?" asked Kate, tremblingly.

"It's splendid. If you'd come!" said Jack.

"Can you ask me that?" said she, smiling sadly; then, with a start: "I must be gettin' back."

"I'll go with you," exclaimed Jack.

"No, no," she protested, "I'll run back the way I came, an' no one will see me. If they do, no one'll hurt me. But," she added shyly, "you can see me to the gate."

They went out; and then Mrs. Gallaher, raising her right hand for silence, glanced from James to her husband.

The clamour of the crowd was dying away; and presently there was the emphatic sound of a kiss from the end of the passage. Falling on her knees, Mrs. Gallaher raised both arms.

"I thank God!" she exclaimed, "for that! He has heard my prayers. You heard it, Jem?" she continued, turning towards the young man's downcast face. "You heard the kiss of love that makes the two hearts one? God bless you, Jem, for your advice. It's yourself has the thrue, lovin' heart!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. CASEY APPOINTED SECRETARY.

THE bazaar was talked of for miles round as the greatest event that had ever happened in the annals of Carrigmore since the occupation of the town by Cromwell's soldiers. Visitors in hundreds thronged in from all parts, and the people who claimed relationship with Mrs. Mulligan could be counted by the score ; for although the Bazaar for the Poor Coal Fund was an annual affair, the interest of the present one centred in the personality of Mrs. Mulligan. The night before, the "Horse and Car" was thronged to the doors ; people even sat on the steps drinking and smoking, whilst a crowd six ranks deep filled the space in front of the bar. So great was the throng, that Mr. Casey, despite his determined face and the habitual awe inspired by his presence, had considerable difficulty in forcing an entrance. There was music and dancing in the coffee-room ; singing, laughter and uproarious conversation everywhere else.

By stern adjuration and the help of his pointed elbows, Mr. Casey at last managed to reach the bar, and was about to inquire from one of the new barmaids—of whom there were three—as to the

whereabouts of the proprietor, when Slogger O'Neil lurched up against him.

"The very man I want!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, seizing the enormous arm of the ex-pugilist. "Bring me to Misther Munro. Force your way!"

"Sure, he sint me to look for you," said Mr. O'Neil in his appallingly hoarse voice. "Git out of the way there! Look out now!"

These words, addressed to all crowding thickly upon him, made those who were close to him hurriedly back, until the hallway became a scene of pushing men and violent language, which threatened to end in a free fight. However, Mr. Casey having both hands clasped round the arm of the Slogger, was dragged by his companion up the stairs, where they picked their steps through amorous couples, until they reached the second landing. A strong barrier had been placed here, and O'Neil, raising it to let himself and his companion pass, dropped it again, and, opening the door of Mr. Munro's bedroom, walked in without ceremony, followed by Mr. Casey.

"Have you got him?" cried a shrill, cracked voice from the bed, and Mr. Casey advancing saw between the hangings of the old-fashioned four-poster Mr. Munro, propped up with pillows, looking haggard and old-aged, the inevitable decanter and tumblers and box of cigars on the table beside him.

"Ay, I've got him," replied Slogger O'Neil. "Here he is."

"Light, more lights, dem you, O'Neil!" exclaimed Mr. Munro, lapsing into his best English

accent. "Dem you, for stoopid fella, let the room be filled with lights to the brim!"

There were already two large candles burning brightly on the mantelpiece; and O'Neil, taking one of them, lit a couple more which were on the dressing-table.

"Will that do, sir?" he asked, turning towards the bed.

Mr. Munro blinked his reddened eyes rapidly at the new lights.

"That'll do, dem you," said he. "I'm lavin' the 'Horse an' Car' to you on condition you'll call it the 'Mulligan Arms.' Does that sound well, Timothy?" he inquired of Mr. Casey, who stood surveying him with folded arms. "Does the 'Mulligan Arms' sthrike you as a good name, Editor of the *Flashlight*, with Slogger O'Neil proprietor-in-chief?"

"I've nothing to say agin it," responded Mr. Casey coldly, and looking round at O'Neil, "I congratulate you, O'Neil, on your good fortune. And now, my man, leave us," he added. "I have business to thransact with Misther Munro."

The Slogger hesitated a moment, his eye fixed on his master, who gave a start, as if uneasy in his surroundings, and pointed a shaking hand at the decanter.

"Ay, O'Neil," said he, "I see what you want. Dhrink yourself dead then, if you like, an' lave Misther Casey an' me alone."

Striding to the table, Mr. Casey stepping hastily aside, the Slogger poured himself out half a tumbler of whisky, and expressing in a hoarse voice his wish for their prolonged existence, drank it at a mouth-

ful, wiped his lips with the back of his hand and marched out of the room.

"An' is this the way I find you?" said Mr. Casey sternly, when he had seated himself beside the table. "Aren't you able to stand your burst of fortune?"

"I'm able to stand the fortune right enough, Tim," replied Mr. Munro. "It's the whisky that gets the betther of me."

Stretching for his tumbler, he raised it with much difficulty, using both hands, to his parched lips. Then, sinking back in the pillows, let the empty tumbler roll down the bed on to the floor. During this, Mr. Casey sat with folded arms and bent brows, deep in thought.

"You'll nivir be able," said he at length, "to thransact business at this rate. You'll want a secretary."

"Right!" said Mr. Munro. "You're always right, my bould son."

"You'll want a secretary," insisted Mr. Casey. "An' at great inconvaniance an' sacrifice of my talents in the carrer of journalism, I offer myself for the vacant post."

"That suits me," observed Mr. Munro. "I've no head for business now. All gone! I'm goin' to injy myself while I last. I've had enough of scrapin' an' savin' to make both inds meet. To the divil with it all, say I! I'll injy myself now, an' let my secretary do all the business. I accept your sarvices."

"I'm obliged to you," rejoined Mr. Casey, with dignity, "and we shall now, with your permission, arrange the question of remuneration."

Sitting up, Mr. Munro smiled his most idiotic smile.

"I appint you, Timothy Casey," said he, "at a thousand a year. Is that enough?"

"Is that enough, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Casey, rising and indignantly surveying him. "You—a millionaire—dare to offer your oldest friend a paltry thousand a year? Do you know what my duties will consist of? The complication of affairs, the enormous corrispondinse, the arrangements of your journeys to and fro on the earth, the careful watching of your multitudinous investmints; and you offer me for all this a mere thousand a year! Johnnie Munro, this is not like you."

"Say two thousand," suggested Mr. Munro.

"Three!" exclaimed Mr. Casey. "Three at the very laste, or I walk out of this room an' lave your sight for ever!"

"Three it is," assented Mr. Munro. "What does it matther out of millions? Sit down there an' dhrink beside me. Take a ceegar. You're my secretary now."

"One momint," observed Mr. Casey, taking a couple of documents from his breast pocket. "Business is business. If I am to safeguard your financial affairs I begin in a proper manner. Here is the agreemint. Have you ink and pens?"

Mr. Munro pointed to the dressing-table at the other side of the room, and Mr. Casey, having found a pen there, hurriedly filled a blank space in one of the documents with the words "three thousand pounds sterling per annum payable weekly," and, returning to the bedside, requested Mr. Munro to sit up and put his signature to the

deed. It was easy enough for Mr. Munro to sit up. It was a different matter to sign his name. He made half a dozen attempts, but his shaking hand refused to make a legible letter, even when he gripped his right wrist with his left hand and put out his tongue to its farthest. With arms around him, Mr. Casey held him up, alternately encouraging and bullying him, but all in vain. The pen slipped from the powerless fingers, and, thrusting him savagely back on the pillows, Mr. Casey went to the door and shouted for O'Neil. It was Mrs. Munro, however, who appeared from the next room.

"Is there anything wrong with Johnnie?" she asked anxiously.

"Everything's wrong with him!" exclaimed Mr. Casey, with red anger. "Is O'Neil anywhere? Hullo, there!" he shouted down towards the uproarious crowd below. "Anyone seen O'Neil?"

Passing into the bedroom, Mrs. Munro stood beside her husband's bed, wringing her hands whilst he grinned inanely at her. Presently O'Neil lurched up the stairs, and Mr. Casey, catching him by his burly shoulders, thrust him into the room.

"I want you," said Mr. Casey, when he had closed the door, "and I want you, too, ma'am, to help Misther Munro to sign his name on a document."

"Sure, he's not in a fit condition to sign anything," observed Mrs. Munro. "Only look at him! He's like an ijit."

"I'm all right," said Mr. Munro, trying to frown himself back to a sense of dignity.

"Indade, you're not; you're all wrong," said Mrs. Munro. "But what is it, Misther Casey,"

she asked, rather suspiciously, "that you want him to sign?"

"Only this paper here," replied Mr. Casey, taking the document from the bed, "appintin' me his secretary, to write his letthers an' manage his affairs. If you think I want to do anything mane or undherhand rade the paper, an' if you're not satisfied, tear it up. I'm actin' as his best friend."

"Troth, I'm sure y'are, Misther Casey," said Mrs. Munro candidly. "I'd thrust you with my life. An' sure that's just what Johnnie wants—someone with eddication to write his letthers."

"If I was goin' to do anything mane or undherhand," said Mr. Casey, "I wouldn't ask you to witness it."

"Of coorse not," assented Mrs. Munro. "Johnnie, pull yourself together now an' do as Misther Casey tells you."

"The long an' short of it is," explained Mr. Casey, "he can't write his name, an' we'll have to hould him up to it. O'Neil, get up there at the back of the bed, an' hould him up by the shouldhers. You take care of the paper, Mrs. Munro, an' I'll guide his hand."

O'Neil did as desired, holding his master under the armpits in a steel-like grip, whilst Mrs. Munro, lower down, smoothed out the document and held the ink-bottle. Then Mr. Munro, more anxious to be let alone than to satisfy them, made a great effort and drew a tortuous line with a sudden dash.

"That won't do!" cried Mr. Casey, enraged again. "Making a J and an O. Go on! Hould the pen tight!"

After much blinking and purpling of the cheeks, Mr. Munro seized his right hand with his left, made sudden darts with the pen, then dropped it and roared :

" Let me out ! You're killin' me ! "

" I know what he wants," exclaimed Mrs. Munro desperately. " He wants a big tumbler of whisky without any wather in it. Hould on now."

Pouring out the drink, she held it to her husband's lips. He drank, and then, having wiped his mouth with her shawl, they all settled down once more for the signature. At last he signed, and they let him back on the pillows.

" You may go now, O'Neil," observed Mr. Casey, as he folded up the paper and put it into his pocket. " I want to talk to Mrs. Munro here."

Touching his forehead, O'Neil went away, and Mr. Casey beckoned Mrs. Munro over to the dressing-table where he placed a chair for her. Then, having brushed aside a heap of letters and papers on the table, he seated himself there between the two tall candles.

" I want to talk very sariously to you, Mrs. Munro," said he, folding his arms and looking down at her broad anxious face. " You see how Johnnie's goin' on. He's dhrinkin' himself into the grave. You'll have to look ahead. You'll want a guardian an' protector whin he's gone."

" Sure, I know that," assented Mrs. Munro, wiping her eyes and glancing sideways towards the bed where her exhausted husband was now loudly snoring, his mouth wide open. " It's thrubblin' me at night with all my other thrubbles. Sometimes it sames to me, Misther Casey, I'd rather be as I

am, livin' a quiet, humble life; for, I sippose, if Johnnie lives long enough they'll be makin' a lord of him an' where ud I be then? I wasn't brought up for mixin' with the titled nobility, an' I dunno how I'll get through the ordale at all."

"By relyin' on me," returned Mr. Casey, suddenly placing a hand on her shoulder and bending down. "Whin Johnnie's gone, I'll take his place. Your affairs will be safe in my hands. Can you thrust me? Would you rather marry a society buttherfly than a man you've known all your life, one of your oldest neighbours here in your own town?"

"There's a great dale in what you say, Misther Casey," said Mrs. Munro; "but, sure, I don't think I'd have the heart to marry agin. I'm too ould, for one thing——"

"Stop!" said Mr. Casey, touching her lips with the tips of his fingers. "You're nayther too ould nor too plain. As a widda surrounded by enormous wealth you'll be the objict of every adventurer an' money hunter in the counthry. They'll flatther you; they'll lie to you; they'll plot agin you. For what? Not to do you good, not to be a frind an' guide to you, but to rob an' plundher you!"

"Thrue for you, thrue for you," said Mrs. Munro bewildered. "There's a great dale in what you say. If they're goin' to surround me like that an' folly me about where would I be? I'm only a helpless woman. But then there's Kate to be married. I wouldn't like to be married before Kate."

"She'll be married sooner than you think," observed Mr. Casey. "The question I ask you,

plainly and bluntly—for I am honist before all things—is, will you have me whin Johnnie's gone ? "

For some moments she remained looking into space and kneading her fat hands together. He awaited her answer with set lips and folded arms. At last she gave a loud sigh.

" I sippose it's the best thing I could do," said she. " I know I can thrust you an' that you'd be able to help me in all difficulties."

" Good ! " exclaimed Mr. Casey, with such loud exultation that Mr. Munro, opening his eyes a moment, gave a grunt of alarm. " Then to clinch the matther—for I won't let you go back on your word—you kin put your name to this agreemint."

He slid from the table, and taking another document from his pocket, unfolded it before her.

" What is this ? " asked Mrs. Munro, again suspiciously.

" It's an agreemint to marry me whin your prisint husbind dies," explained Mr. Casey gravely. " You kin rade it. You'd betther do so, if you don't thrust me."

" Isn't my word good enough for you ? " inquired Mrs. Munro, drawing back from the proffered paper.

" It is enough and more than enough here in your own home," he replied. " But whin you have become the denizen of lordly halls, whin you have adventurers an' money hunters on your thrack, an' flattherers on ivry hand, you might say, ' Timothy, whin I gave my promise to you in Carrigmore, I wanted a frind, a comforter, someone to lane on ; but now I have hapes of frinds I throw you over ! ' "

" Give me the pen ! " said Mrs. Munro, stretching her hand. " God forbid I'd ivir be so black-hearted as that ! "

He spread the paper on the table and she signed it. Then he kissed her, and the colour mounted all over her face as her husband groaned in his troubled sleep.

The editorial of the next issue of the *Flashlight* began :

" This is the last time the *Carrigmore Flashlight* will be published. Needless to say, We make this momentous announcement with the deepest regret and a world of emotion. For more than half a lifetime We have served the interests of Our country and Carrigmore in particular. We may have had faults, We may have displeased some, but We hope Our readers will believe that We always acted for the best. We have now assumed the position of Secretary and Financial Adviser to Our dear friend and townsman, J. Munro, Esq., to whose services henceforth We shall devote the rest of Our life and the entire service of Our abilities."

CHAPTER XXV.

A BAZAAR AND AN ELOPEMENT.

THE town was early astir for the Mulligan bazaar. Fifty additional constables had been drafted in overnight. The Countess called in her motor-car for Mrs. Mulligan, whose appearance, as she came down the steps of the " Horse and Car," was greeted with deafening cheers from the vast crowd. When she took her seat in the car beside the young Countess, all hats were raised to the square-faced old woman in the black satin. She showed no evidence of excitement or pleasure, but remained grim and silent, looking into space. By universal consent, the car, with several others, made a tour of the town between densely crowded ranks of people—thousands of visitors having flocked in to see the strange old woman who had inherited so vast a fortune. Flags and handkerchiefs were waved from the windows as she passed, and, in front, marched the Carrigmore brass band playing martial music. When the tour of the town was finished they returned to the Town Hall, where they alighted under a great red streamer with the words " Welcome Mrs. Mulligan," in large white letters. The entire front of the building was festooned with evergreens and gay with bunting. The police kept back

the crowd, as the cars ranged up, and cheers burst forth when the Countess was seen to offer her arm to Mrs. Mulligan up the steps.

Inside, the large building was already crowded. The stalls were in readiness, and long streamers stretched across the vaulted ceiling. The platform was full of representative persons, including clergymen of every denomination. In the centre of the platform was a large crimson-velvet chair in which Mrs. Mulligan was placed. Behind her, and across the wall, stretched a white sheet bearing in huge red letters the couplet:

> "God bless you, Mrs. Mulligan,
> Who makes the hungry full again!"

Another burst of cheering from those within announced the fact that Mrs. Mulligan had taken the seat of honour. Then, from her left, rose the Earl of Carrigmore, who raised his hand and smilingly requested silence. He explained, in eloquent language, the object of the bazaar, adding that additional interest was given it on this occasion by the presence of their philanthropic and distinguished townswoman, Mrs. Mulligan. At the mention of her name there was renewed cheering and, when he announced that he was given to understand that Mrs. Mulligan, as soon as she had actually her millions in possession, was prepared to give a thousand pounds to the poor of Carrigmore, the applause was deafening. Through it all Mrs. Mulligan sat gripping her oak stick across her lap and staring grimly before her. When the Earl had finished, he approached her and asked her to declare the bazaar open. She looked at him a

moment without replying, and he repeated the request.

"Sure, what d'you take me for?" said she, with contemptuous indignation. "Isn't the place open an' full of people up to the brim?"

Only those quite close to her heard these words, owing to the noise in the hall; but the Earl, with ready tact, advanced to the front of the platform and loudly declared that Mrs. Mulligan authorized him to declare the bazaar open, and wished it triumphant success.

Then the business of the day started, accompanied by the brass band in the gallery. For some time Mrs. Mulligan's deep-set eyes roamed over the scene. Presently, putting her hand into her bosom, she drew forth pipe and matches and proceeded quietly and deliberately to smoke. In a few moments those who were pressing about her hastily retired. Later in the day a diversion was caused by the appearance of a squad of school children dressed in white, who marched to the front of the platform and sung in honour of its occupant. The noise of the bazaar abated and the perspiring bandsmen gladly rested. As she listened to the singing, Mrs. Mulligan impassively studied the children, recognizing many who had hooted and pelted her in the streets. They passed out when their song was over, curtsying as they went. She watched them depart; then, during the cheers and renewed turmoil, knocked out the ashes of her pipe against her hand and proceeded calmly to fill it again.

Towards nightfall Jack Gallaher, leaving the bazaar, went round to the side gate which opened

from the laneway of thatched cabins straight into the stable-yard of the Inn. All was deserted here and dark save for the faint shimmer of an old lamp from the depths of the stable, whence came occasional noise of whisking tails and trampling hoofs.

Looking up at the back of the Inn and observing no light as yet in Kate's room, he sat down on the ladder against the wall, lit a pipe and ruminated while he waited.

It seemed a long time—and he had risen and paced the yard over and over again—before he heard the side gate creak and the dark figure of a man appear. Jack Gallaher shrunk back into the shadow of the wall. The man, coming nearer, gave a low whistle.

"Is that you, Jem?" asked Jack in lowered voice.

"That's me," replied James Donohue. "Where are you, Jack?"

"Here I am," returned Jack, stepping out and touching his friend on the shoulder. "There's no sign of Kate yet," and he looked up at the dark windows. "Was she at the bazaar whin you left?"

"I didn't see her," answered James. "It's gettin' mighty cowld an' dark now; isn't it?" He turned up his collar and stamped his feet. "I wondher what's keepin' her!"

"We'll only have to wait, that's all," said Jack morosely. "Light your pipe. If it wasn't for mother, Kate Munro might go to the divil for all I care!"

"Is that the way with you?" said James, searching for his pipe.

"Ay, that's the way with me," returned Jack

Gallaher gloomily. "There's a laddher over here. Let's sit down on it an' wait. People 'll say I run away with Kate for her money," he added, as they sat down together. "But, you know, Jem, it's just to plaise mother. I don't care a thraneen for all Kate's millions!"

"Well, money's a great timptation," observed James, now smoking. "You kin do a power with money."

"It can't bring happiness," said Jack.

"Well, next doore to it," said James cheerfully. "There's not much happiness with poverty ayther."

"I sippose not," remarked Jack.

There was a long silence. They heard the distant noise and cheering of the crowd; and the faint strains of the band from the Town Hall. From time to time Jack, impatiently, rose and stood back, to have a look at the back windows, only to resume his seat with an expression of dissatisfaction.

"They'll all be back soon," said he, "an' then we'll have no chance at all."

"Is Murphy ready with the car?" asked James.

"Sure, he's bin outside at the ind of the lane," replied Jack, "for the last three hours. I hope he won't get tired an' go home."

"Maybe I'd betther go an' see," suggested James.

He had been sitting crouched up with his elbows on his knees, and was anxious for a change.

"It wouldn't be a bad iday," assented Jack.

Scarcely had James stood up, when, giving a glance over his shouder, he started.

"There she is!" he exclaimed.

"Where?" asked Jack, jumping up and seizing him by the shoulder.

"Whisht!" returned James warningly. "Up there! There's a light in her room."

This was true. They stood together staring up, and presently the window was lowered from the top and Kate, thrusting out her head, looked down.

Jack instantly gave a low whistle and she smiled and disappeared. They waited some minutes listening to her as she moved about in her room, apparently getting ready for the elopement. There was louder noise now from the street as of many people on the move; and Jack, alarmed at the prospect of the Inn filling up, groped about for some clay, which he threw at the window. Kate looked out again.

"Will you soon be ready?" asked Jack, in a loud whisper.

"I can't fas'en the thrunk!" replied Kate in an agitated voice.

She was indeed out of breath with her exertions.

"Jem," exclaimed Jack quickly, "go in by the back doore an' run up an' help her. Jem's going up to you," he added to Kate, who nodded and disappeared again.

James Donohue hurried to the back door and hurried back again with the information that it was locked and barred.

"The divil take it!" exclaimed Jack. "Wait," he added, "the laddher! Come an' help me with the laddher!"

They raised the ladder slowly until it was just high enough to reach Kate's window. She stood there, listening to their efforts, but unable to see distinctly, owing to the darkness in the yard and the light in her own room. The noise of the people

returning from the Town Hall grew nearer and louder.

"I'll hould it for you, Jem," cried Jack, firmly grasping the sides of the ladder. "Go up an kape your head cool."

With some difficulty James Donohue got a footing and mounted slowly up.

"Put out the light, Kate!" cried Jack; and Kate promptly extinguished the candle.

James Donohue went up cautiously until he reached the window. Here he paused, giving directions to Kate to thrust up the top sash, when he himself raised the lower one and clambered into the room. He found it necessary to light the candle again, in order to strap Kate's trunk. Dressed in cloak and hood, as she had come from the bazaar, she assisted him with trembling hands. When all was finished she prepared to get through the window whilst James held up the candle behind her. But when she had placed her foot on the sill, the window came down suddenly, and Kate, shrieking with agony, attempted to drag her imprisoned foot away. Hastily placing the candle on the dressing-table, James went to her assistance, and found the task of freeing her most difficult owing to the rope of the sash having broken. The more she tugged, the louder she shrieked, and when at last he released her she fell into a chair screaming with agony. He knelt down beside her, frantically endeavouring to unlace her boot. In this attitude he was discovered a moment later, when the door was burst open and a crowd of people—including Mrs. Mulligan and several clergymen—rushed in.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BY ORDER OF THE BISHOP.

A POWERFUL, fresh-complexioned priest advanced into the room, and seizing James Donohue by the shoulder, dragged the terrified young man to his feet.

"What's the manin' of this?" he sternly demanded.

It was Father Cavanagh himself, the parish priest; and before his dominating glance James Donohue shook like a child and hung his head in silence.

"D'you hear me spakin' to you?" said Father Cavanagh, giving him a furious shake.

"I do, father," stammered James.

"Then answer the question," exclaimed Father Cavanagh. "How is it you're found in this young lady's bedroom?"

James Donohue looked from the angry clergyman to the astonished group of faces in the doorway, and then helplessly down at Kate, who now sat on her corded box pale and silent.

"It was an accidint, father," he replied.

"D'you mane to tell me," declared Father Cavanagh, falling back from the culprit and folding

his arms, "that you came into this room, sir, by accident? and that you were found kneelin' beside this young lady by accident? How did you come in?"

"By the doore, sir," answered James.

"Oh, you came in by the door?" said Father Cavanagh scornfully. "An' you locked it afther you, did you?"

"It wasn't locked, sir," returned James.

He was unaware that the cautious Kate had locked it and had been too excited and confused to notice that the pressure of those without had made the time-eaten lock to yield.

"How dare you!" exclaimed Father Cavanagh, looking him up and down; "how dare you tell me a lie like that to my face? The door was locked an' had to be burst open, owing to the cries for help made by your unhappy victim here. Now, good people," he added, turning abruptly to the crowd, "I have a very sarious investigation to make an' I must ask you to withdraw."

This request was at once obeyed, Mrs. Mulligan alone remaining with her back against the wall, her folded hands resting on her stick and her wrinkled face turned eagerly towards the others.

"Now, Miss Munro," observed Father Cavanagh, advancing towards her when the place was cleared, "I want to know if you desire to charge this man; for, in that case, I'll sind at once for the police."

"He done nothin' to me," returned Kate, gazing fixedly on the floor.

The pain seemed to have left her foot and taken refuge in her heart.

"I take your word for that gladly," said Father

Cavanagh, speaking more tenderly. "But you owe your escape to our appearance guided by the hand of Providence. We came in time to baulk his hellish designs. Then, I take it, you don't want to charge him?"

"I do not," replied Kate, faintly.

"That is," observed Father Cavanagh, "because you are aware of a higher law than the civil law. I take it as that. I take it that you are aware that he will he thried by the Church?"

"I don't want him thried at all, father," said Kate, looking up at him. "He done nothin' to me. He was thryin' to take off my boot because I hurt my foot."

Knitting his brows, Father Cavanagh glanced from her to James Donohue, who was standing aside in a dejected and nervous attitude.

"How did you hurt your foot?" asked Father Cavanagh, suspiciously.

"I hurt it in the winda," replied Kate, glancing towards it. "The sash fell on it."

"An' what in the name of all that's wondherful," exclaimed Father Cavanagh, amazed and perplexed, "were you doin', puttin' you foot through the winda?"

Kate made no reply. She looked again fixedly at the floor, and in the silence that followed Mrs. Mulligan gave a short cough.

"Miss Munro," said Father Cavanagh solemnly, "I'm bound to express that your explanation perplexes me. I'll say no more at prisint. I don't undherstand it. Can you tell me, at once now, why this man was in your room?"

Again Kate made no answer. Father Cavanagh

waited, gazing at her bent head, and Mrs. Mulligan gave another cough.

"D'you refuse to answer me?" said Father Cavanagh, with a touch of regret. "Come, now. You know who you're spakin' to. Answer the question."

Kate made no reply.

"I wasn't in here, sir," explained James, feeling bound to come to the rescue, "with any wrong intintions. I was not, indade, father."

"Silence, sir!" thundered Father Cavanagh, turning on him. "Don't spake till you're spoken to. You'll have to answer questions, an' that soon, addhressed to you by a higher authority than even your parish priest. I'm spakin' to this unfortunate girl here. Miss Munro! you won't answer my question. Will you tell me, then, why that box you're sittin' on is out in the middle of the floor, with a rope tied round it?"

Once more Kate, her lips set tightly and cheeks blanched, remained stiff and silent.

"Very well," said Father Cavanagh, after a painful pause. "I'm sorry for this. There are few things I have ivir met in the whole coorse of my life that I am more sorry for than this. I've always looked upon you as a good honest girl——"

"I am so still," exclaimed Kate, flushing, as she looked up at him.

"Maybe so," said he, "maybe so. I hope in God it may be so. But appearances are agin it. Your own silence is agin it. But I'll lay this matther before a higher thribunal. I'll go to the Bishop."

Both Kate and James Donohue visibly started at

this statement, and Mrs. Mulligan, raising her head, stared fixedly at the clergyman.

"If you won't answer me," said Father Cavanagh, "you'll answer him. I lave you now, Miss Munro, not in anger, but in deep and heartfelt sorrow. As for you, James Donohue," turning sternly on the dejected young man, "don't lave these premises until you hear from me."

With that, Father Cavanagh turned and left the room, and when he was gone silence reigned there for several minutes. At last James, approaching Kate, looked remorsefully down at her.

"I'm very sorry for all this," said he humbly. "It's a terrible business, an' I'm very sorry for it."

"Don't spake to me," exclaimed Kate, looking up indignantly at him. "Don't dar' spake to me!"

"So he's goin' to talk to the Bishop," observed Mrs. Mulligan, coming in closer as James recoiled. "That manes that you'll have to git married, the two of yiz."

"Nivir!" said Kate, rising at last and gazing with undisguised hate at James Donohue's downcast face. "Not even if the Bishop ordhered it! I'd kill myself first before I'd marry that man there. I see it all now. It's all his doin'. He thried to thrap me. He was always jealous of Jack Gallaher an' he made all this come about. But, no! I'll nivir marry you, James Donohue, not while I have a breath in my body."

"You're quite mistaken altogether, Miss Munro," said James. "I'm not that kind o' person at all. I did my best to help Jack. It was all an accidint."

"I don't want to hear you!" exclaimed Kate,

turning on him. "What right have you to be here. Lave my room. I don't want to see or spake to you."

"Ay, you'd betther lave her alone for the prisint, Misther Donohue," suggested Mrs. Mulligan, winking at him. "There's a time for ivrything, you know."

James Donohue slowly paced towards the door which Father Cavanagh had closed; but when he opened it, he found himself confronted by Mr. Casey, with O'Neil standing darkly in the background.

"Where are you goin'?" asked Mr. Casey, putting up his right hand.

"I'm goin' home," replied James gloomily.

"Pardon me," said Mr. Casey, laying a hand on the young man's arm. "I'm sorry for it, but you're my prisoner!"

"Your prisoner?" said James, puzzled. "What d'you mane?"

"I mane," answered Mr. Casey solemnly, "that I have been authorized by Father Cavanagh to place you undher arrist pendin' the decision of his lordship, the Bishop, consarnin' this most lamentable occurrence. I have to requist you to folly me, and I sincerely hope you will do so quietly, so that I may not have to invoke the physical assistance of my frind O'Neil."

"Are you jokin' with me, Misther Casey?" inquired James, with a look of profound misery at the other's solemn face.

"I wish," returned Mr. Casey gravely, "I felt in a condition to joke over so sarious a matther. No, sir. My ordhers are imperative. You'll be

good enough to accompany me. A room has been prepared for you, an' you'll be thrated with ivry considheration until your liberty is restored by ordhers of his lordship."

"Very well, Misther Casey," said James, with a deep sigh. "If that's Father Cavanagh's ordhers I must only obey thim."

"I'm glad to find you in that spirit," said Mr. Casey, with an air of relief, "an' that our frind O'Neil won't be called on to give a display of his muscular ability. O'Neil! lade the way. You know the room."

O'Neil at once turned up the stairs. James Donohue submissively followed, and Mr. Casey, wearing an expression of profound solemnity, brought up the rear. They went along a narrow passage to a room at the end. It was known as the bottle room, being used for storage of empty bottles, hundreds of which were packed on shelves along the walls and on the floor. A tiny window, with dirt-encrusted panes, looked over the stable roofs. Entering this evil-smelling place, James Donohue gazed around in helpless dismay.

"No," observed Mr. Casey, who was close behind him, "it's not the kind of spot I'd like to put you in if I had my own way. This is not my doin', James; I'm only an insthrumint."

He held out a hand as he spoke, and James, taking it, pressed it fervently.

"I know that, Misther Casey," said he brokenly. "I don't blame you."

"I am an insthrumint," explained Mr. Casey, with emotion, "of J. Munro, Esquire, who is an insthrumint of Father Cavanagh, who is an insthrumint of

the Bishop. James, don't let your heart harden agin me for this. It goes agin my grain. It hurts me as much as you."

Tears came into James Donohue's eyes.

"Thank you, Misther Casey, thank you," said he, pressing his hand again. "You spake kindly, an' I thank you. If," he added sighing, "Miss Munro had not accused me of layin' a thrap for her an' thinkin' me mane an' desateful, I could bear all this with a light heart."

"With reference to your dealin's with Miss Munro," observed Mr. Casey, "I say nothin'. I know nothin', an' I want to know nothin'. We're all mortil, James. We're all liable to slip. I make no accusation."

"It was all a mistake, Misther Casey," said James eagerly. "Sure, you wouldn't suppose I'd be capable of insultin' Miss Munro or any other respictable girl? It's not in my nature."

"I'm willin' to belave that," returned Mr. Casey. "Time clears up all mysteries. I say nothin'. Only this: no matther what you did or didn't do, you may belave that, as a man, I sympathize with you. Flesh is mortal. O'Neil, sthrike a match an' light the candle."

O'Neil, who had been hanging about the doorway, struck a match on his trousers, and, lighting a candle, stuck it into an empty bottle.

In the faint light Mr. Casey, shaking hands with his prisoner again, bade him a sorrowful farewell and left him alone with the rats.

Meanwhile, Jack Gallaher, having left the stable yard and dismissed the man who was waiting in the lane with a car, hurried round to the front of the

Inn, and, entering, mingled with the crowd. At the bar he listened to the accounts of the scene in Kate's room—stories which were not lacking in variety or exaggeration. Having heard enough to convince him that it was useless to remain, he went across to his own home. As with downcast face he entered the back parlour Mrs. Gallaher jumped up.

"Jack!" she exclaimed, and Mr. Gallaher, pipe in hand, turned in his chair. "Jack, what's this? Is this another disappointmint? I've had enough an' more than enough. Don't tell me there's more misery in store for me!"

"It is another disappointmint, mother," said Jack, wearily sitting down in the shadow of the door.

"I thought so!" cried Mrs. Gallaher, throwing up her hands. "I saw it in your face the momint you enthered. It's not to be. I see it's not to be. Everything is agin me. What happened? Go on; tell me what happened!"

"Everything wint right enough up to the last momint," explained Jack. "Kate had her things packed an' Jem went up the laddher to help her down. But just as she was puttin' her foot out of the winda, the sash rope broke an' down kem the winda on her foot. Then she screamed, an' the people comin' from the bazaar rushed in an' found Jem there. Father Cavanagh was there, an' they're tellin' all sorts of stories in the bar about it."

"Wait a momint!" exclaimed his mother breathlessly. "Father Cavanagh was there, you say? An' found James Donohue in Kate's bedroom? Then it's all over! Say no more! It's all

over. Nothin' more kin be done. May God help me for a miserable, wretched, unhappy woman!"

As his mother burst into tears with her hands over her face, Jack gazed helplessly across at his father, who nodded with solemn gravity and proceeded slowly to relight his pipe, which had gone out during the recital.

"It wasn't my fault, mother," said Jack. "I couldn't help it. I done my best."

"I'm not blamin' you, child," exclaimed his mother, taking her hands from her face. "I nivir did blame you. You might have bin married to Kate Munro two years ago only for thim that threw cowld wather on it."

Throwing the match into the grate, Mr. Gallaher flushed as he pulled hard at the pipe.

"Whin I had set my heart," continued Mrs. Gallaher bitterly, "on your marryin' Kate an' the girl was ready an' willin', I got no help from thim that ought to have helped me. I got nothin' but sneers an' jeers from thim that should have been the first to give me a helpin' hand in my lovin' plans for my only child."

"Who was it gave you the sneers an' jeers?" asked Mr. Gallaher hesitatingly. "For, as far as I'm concerned, I left the matther in your own hands."

"Thim that the cap fits kin wear it," observed Mrs. Gallaher, rising and gazing—as she had done all along—at Jack. "Thim that have a conscience shows it in their faces whin it's too late. But now, what does it matther? I kin do no more. I had no one to help me. An' now it's all over, all over!"

"Don't go on like that, mother," suggested Jack plaintively. "It's not too late yet. Kate gave her promise, an' she's not the girl to go back on it."

"What's the use of talkin' like that to me now?" retorted Mrs. Gallaher bitterly. "Father Cavanagh found James Donohue in the girl's room, an' there's an ind to it. He'll have to marry her!"

"Is it Jem marry Kate Munro?" said Mr. Gallaher. "Sure, she'd nivir have him!"

"It's all over now, Jack," observed his mother, ignoring her husband's remark. "But I don't blame you, darlin'. I know you done your best!"

"Jem's not the man to cut me out, mother," said Jack decisively. "There's nothing mane or undherhand about him."

"Maybe not," returned his mother. "But the man that's ordhered by his clargy to marry a millionaire's grand-niece isn't likely to disobey. Say no more, Jack. I'll do my jooty as wife an' mother while God gives me strength, an' whin He calls me I'm ready to go!"

Having uttered these words in a pathetic voice, Mrs. Gallaher went slowly away, leaving Jack and his father in a mood of deep dejection.

For some time Mr. Gallaher continued to pull, with an air of melancholy meditation, at his pipe, unconscious that it was out, whilst Jack sat with folded arms and chin on his breast in the shadow of the door.

"You'll have to go to Jem at once," suggested his father.

"They've locked him up," said Jack, "in the bottle room."

"Glory be to God!" exclaimed his father, facing round. "What's the manin' of that?"

"The manin' of it is," explained Jack, "that Father Cavanagh won't let him lave the premises until he gets the Bishop's decision as to what is to be done in the matter. Jem, from what I hear, is a close prisoner an' the Slogger is on guard."

"Bedad, that's a sthrong misure to take," observed Mr. Gallaher astonished. "But I sippose there's no gettin' beyond the Bishop. What he says is law. An' what are you to do now, Jack, for I sippose you're not goin' to give up the hunt?"

"I dunno what to do," said Jack despairingly. "If I could get at Jem I might know betther how matthers stand. But I don't see how I'm to get a word with him."

"Hould on now," remarked Mr. Gallaher, after a few more meditative pulls at the unlit pipe. "He's in the bottle room, you say? That's up above the stable roof, if I'm not mistaken."

"That's where it is," assented Jack.

"If you could get up on the stable roof," suggested his father thoughtfully, "you might be able to raich him."

Jack jumped up, and pulling a cap from his pocket put it on his head.

"That's a good iday," said he. "I'll thry that at once."

"But take care of yourself, my boy," exclaimed his father, rising as Jack prepared to depart. "They'll be on the watch. Don't get into thrubble."

"Oh, I'm able to mind myself," said Jack, as he started off.

His father went after him to the front door and watched him cross the Square—not to the front entrance of the Inn, but round towards the lane leading to the stable yard. Then returning to the back parlour, Mr. Gallaher relit his pipe and waited. An hour later Jack came back despondent, stating that the place was too well guarded, O'Neil being busy in the yard.

The following night he was more fortunate. There was no one about the stables and the night was dark. Clambering up to the roof, he flung some pebbles at the little window of the bottle room, and presently saw the hollow-eyed, pallid face of James Donohue pressed against the pane.

"It's me, Jem!" said Jack, standing up and waving his cap.

Next moment there was a noise of breaking glass. James had smashed a pane and through this aperture called down:

"Is that you, Jack?" in a sad, hoarse voice.

"Ay, Jem," replied Jack eagerly. "Can you get out?"

"I'm not to lave until the banquet," explained James, huskily. "I belave I'm to go down then, and if I do, Bishop or no Bishop, I'll make my escape. It's a terrible business."

"What does the Bishop say?" asked Jack, standing on tiptoe.

"He says," answered James, "I'm to marry Miss Munro."

"What are you doin' up there?" roared a hoarse voice beneath. "Come down ow a that!"

It was the voice of O'Neil, and as Jack turned

to gaze down, the face of James disappeared from the little window.

"Are you comin' down?" yelled O'Neil. "Or will I go up to you with a pitchfork?"

"I'm comin' down!" cried Jack.

As he spoke, he ran down the roof and jumped fiercely on to O'Neil's upturned face. The two men rolled to the ground, but presently Jack's agile figure rose and sped across the stableyard, leaving the stunned Slogger huddled on the cobble stones.

When, white and breathless, Jack rushed into the back parlour, his mother rose and looked at him, her dark eyes enlarged.

"Have you seen him?" she asked.

"I have," panted Jack, sinking down in a chair. "And the Bishop says he must marry Kate."

"Then whatever happens," said Mrs. Gallaher, "an' nothin' kin happen worse nor this, let my funeral be ordhered, with no flowers by request, and let me be buried in consecrated ground. Had them that ought to have bin a help an' a guidance to me—poor wake woman that I am—had they done their lawful jooty by me an' not thrown cowld wather over me at all times an' saisons, things might have bin different. But it is the will of God, and the hearse may come round to the front door now or to-morra or the next day."

At these wild words, Mr. Gallaher turned round to protest, but a flash from his wife's eyes sent him cowering silently into his chair.

"I've said what I have to say," exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, speaking in a rising voice as she made towards the door. "Bury me where you plaise!"

No word was spoken by the two others as she

went slowly out, but shortly after she had left Mr. Gallaher turned about and opened his mouth to say something. Next moment, over the top stairs, Mrs. Gallaher cried down :

" It doesn't matther where you put me whin I'm dead an' gone ! "

Mr. Gallaher cowered down again without speaking, and deep gloom settled once more on Gallaher's Stores.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BANQUET.

A PLENTIFUL repast was spread in the smoke-room, where Mrs. Mulligan sat at the head of the table with Mr. Casey on her right, and all other seats occupied by those who were first to take them. Soon the room became full of uproar. Toasts were indiscriminately proposed, several persons being on their feet with raised glasses at the same moment. There was some attempt at order when Mr. Casey referred in eloquent terms to the leading figure, not only at that banquet, but in the grand old town of Carrigmore. Indeed, tears rose to his eyes when he spoke of Mrs. Mulligan's unique virtues, her womanliness, her great-hearted generosity. He remembered, as a remarkable coincidence, that it was also the occasion of her birthday—a fact of which neither Mrs. Mulligan herself nor anyone else seemed to be aware—and rapturously wished her many happy returns. The only thing wanted (he added) to consummate the charm of that meeting was the presence of the illustrious and distinguished Mr. Pepper.

Someone shouted out from the end of the room :

" Why isn't he here ? "

Mr. Casey admitted that he was unable to reply. He stared towards the speaker or the person whom he took to be the speaker, and shook his head.

"Bring him here!" shouted someone else.

This seemed a commendable suggestion. Mr. Casey, still on his feet, rested both hands on the banquet table and looked steadfastly across at Mr. Munro, who was near on the left side.

"You hear that, Johnnie?" said he. "Will you bring Misther Pepper here?"

"I will if you'll come with me, editorial," replied Mr. Munro, smiling genially over an array of tumblers.

Striking his fist on the table, Mr. Casey straightened himself, thrust back his chair, and beckoned to his friend.

"Is this to be a deppitation?" inquired the latter, rising and unsteadily approaching.

"Heir to millions," answered Mr. Casey, taking his friend by the arm, "whativir it is, we'll live an' die together."

Few noticed their departure and those who did were not concerned about it. Mr. Pepper was up in his room, having put on his glasses, prepared to read the heavy batch of letters on the table before him, when the door was opened and, arm-in-arm, the two men appeared.

"Misther Pepper, sir," observed Mr. Casey, as both halted near the doorway, "a scene of great beauty an' festivity is enacted here to-night."

Mr. Pepper looked critically over his spectacles.

"I'm aware of that," said he. "Noisy as this place usually is, to-night it is an Inferno."

"I thank you, sir," returned Mr. Casey with

great politeness. "We come, sir, from the Inferno of jubilation and triumph, at the unanimous request of the foremost citizens of Carrigmore—includin' the illustrious Mrs. Mulligan—to request you, sir, to grace the ceremony with your honoured presence."

"An' me, too," observed Mr. Munro. "I come here to wish you many happy returns, sir, on the occasion of your birthday."

"And I," said Mr. Pepper with marked coldness, "whilst thanking you and your friends for the kind invitation, respectfully decline."

The two friends held a whispered consultation, which terminated by Mr. Casey giving his companion's arm a jerk, and crying:

"Hould up, Johnnie!"

"Misther Pepper, sir," he added, "you will excuse me, sir, I am a man of few words."

"I don't agree with you," said Mr. Pepper with irritation. "I think you have a great deal too much to say."

"Pardin me," returned Mr. Casey, blandly smiling, "pardin me, Pepper. You don't know me, Pepper. I'm a man of few words whin I have to spake to the pint. And I'm goin' to spake to the pint to-night. I cannot return to that illustrious assemblage an' tell thim you refuse the honour of their invitation. Pepper, I can't do it, and I won't!"

"Words like thim, seccetary," remarked Mr. Munro, wiping his eyes with his sleeve, "are worthy of you. If Pepper doesn't belave in you, seccetary an' editorial, here's a man that does. God bless you, seccetary, God bless you!"

With these words, spoken in broken accents. Mr. Munro laid his face against Mr. Casey's shoulder and wept.

"Hould up, heir of millions," said Mr. Casey feelingly. "You've a big heart afther all. But hould up a bit till I tackle Pepper."

"See here," observed Mr. Pepper, rising and tapping his knuckles on the table as he looked across at the two men, "if you have nothing to do, I have; and I would be obliged if you would let me do it."

"Pepper," exclaimed Mr. Casey, extending his forearm towards him, "you've sealed your doom. If you were to go down on your knees now an' ask me to let you down to the bankit, I wouldn't do it. I'd refuse. Don't ask me!"

"Don't be too hard on Pepper, seccetary," suggested Mr. Munro in a sentimental tone. "He may be an orphan. He may have no mother."

"I don't care whether he has a mother or father or great-grandmother," protested Mr. Casey energetically. "If he went down on his bare knees this minute and begged me to let him down to the bankit, I'd refuse him! Pepper, these are my last words to you!"

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mr. Pepper, reseating himself. "I have heard quite enough."

"You don't appreciate the honour," said Mr. Casey scornfully. "Do you know who an' what we are, sir?"

"I know that you are both drunk," retorted Mr. Pepper, "and, if you don't leave this room pretty quick I'll put you out."

"Very well," said Mr. Casey sternly. "Very

good, Pepper. Come, heir of millions. Don't sanctify this place with your illustrious presence. Pepper," he exclaimed, as they turned back to the door, " rimimber, ask nothin' further from me, for I'll refuse to do it, or to give it to you, or to have any dealin's with you."

" Seccetary," inquired Mr. Munro, as they stood in the doorway a moment to look back, " kin I put out my tongue at him ? "

" Officially," replied Mr. Casey, " you may sartinly put out your tongue at him."

Mr. Pepper, however, whose head was now bent over his letters, was unaware of this demonstration, and the two men left for the more congenial atmosphere of the banquet chamber.

They had scarcely gone when Mr. Pepper, having opened and read his first letter, sat back and uttered a cry of dismay. It was from his firm in London to the effect that they were advised from America that the will, having been photographed and thrown enlarged on a screen, showed the name of the legatee to be MILLIGAN. He was not an emotional man, but this statement made the room seem to turn round and he grasped the sides of his chair to steady himself. His first instinct was for instant flight; but on reflection, he felt that the news should in justice be immediately imparted to those whom it so closely affected. At the same time, he decided to leave by the first available train, which, on consulting his time-table, he found would arrive at Carrigmore on its way to Dublin in twenty-five minutes. He had little time to spare, and at once packed his small belongings and bundled his letters into his bag.

The revelry was still in progress when he descended to the hall and sent someone for Mr. Munro, who, after a protracted interval, came out of the banquet room supported on one side by Mr. Casey and on the other by O'Neil.

"I have something to say to Mr. Munro," said Mr. Pepper. "Where can we go?"

Mr. Casey was sober enough to see that something serious had happened. He pushed open the door of the coffee-room, where the overflow of guests were making merry.

"Ladies an' gentlemin," said Mr. Casey, "a privit interview. Just for five minutes or less!"

They tramped out good-humouredly; and Mr. Casey, having closed the door, deposited Mr. Munro in a seat behind which stood O'Neil.

"I have very important news for Mr. Munro," explained Mr. Pepper, "and I regret that it is very unwelcome. The fact is, a lamentable mistake has been made. I have been informed from London that the name of the legatee is not Mulligan."

"What!" shrieked Mr. Casey, jumping into the air and spreading out his arms.

Mr. Munro looked up with stupid, heavy eyes.

"What's the matter," he asked, as if awaking from sleep.

"Matther?" yelled Mr. Casey, rushing to him and shouting into his ear. "This man here says that Mrs. Mulligan's not the heiress afther all. It's all a sham an' a delusion! You're to get no money from America. Not a penny!"

At the mention of money Mr. Munro seemed, in some degree, to recover his intelligence. Rising

suddenly, he stared wildly at Mr. Pepper, who set his back against the cabinet and gripped his bag.

"Why," cried Mr. Munro in a heart-rending shriek, "I've borrowed right an' left! I've mortgaged the 'Horse an' Car' I—I—I'm ruined! ruined!"

With an awful sob he sank down, shaking and huddled, in the chair.

"I am very sorry," said Mr. Pepper, who seemed deeply impressed. "But I am not responsible. It was no fault of mine. I wish you good-bye!"

"O'Neil, hould him!" yelled Mr. Casey. "Hould on to him! Throttle him!"

A crowd of men now rushed in, blocking the doorway, and as O'Neil, lowering his head, bull-like, made a rush for him, Mr. Pepper frantically dashed through the crowd, striking right and left with his bag, and in less than a minute was in the open Square, flying past the shrieking mob around the bonfire and racing for the train which was now shrieking as it entered the station. Within five minutes he was seated pale and breathless in a first-class carriage and left Carrigmore for ever.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON TRAMP ONCE MORE.

DURING the greater portion of the day the Gallaher Stores remained shuttered, the blinds drawn in the upper windows. But Mrs. Gallaher spent a great deal of time holding one of the curtains aside and peeping out. Sometimes when her heart became surcharged with the bitterness of disappointment and envy, she went downstairs to the back room, where her husband sat near the grate solemnly smoking and Jack stood close to the window, looking out at the hens. Towards nightfall, when the men were setting the bonfire alight, she opened the front door and stood there with folded arms, a cold, bitter smile on her lips. The fire flared up, crackling and spitting above the yells of the crowd, and the band blared as the red light illumined the Market Square. Hundreds of faces appeared with startling distinctness, and the people nearest the fire began to dance. She had seen without understanding it the flight of Mr. Pepper, and, later, a man hurried down the steps of the Inn and came directly towards her.

"Is that you, Mrs. Gallaher?" he said in breathless tones. "Is Jack inside?"

"He is inside, Jem Donohue," replied Mrs. Gallaher sternly. "But I don't think he wants to see you ivir agin."

"He'll see me for the sake of the news I bring him," returned James Donohue, "if not for my own sake."

He went past her as she stepped aside, and, in a moment, was standing face to face with Jack and Jack's father.

"You don't blame me, Jack?" he said, holding out his hand. "It was no fault of mine."

"No," said Jack, taking the hand. "I nivir blamed you. It was an accidint."

"They said I'd have to marry her," explained James, with tears in his voice. "But I med up my mind I wouldn't, cost what it might, for I know where her heart is fixed. And now I've strange news for you. Misther Pepper's run away."

"I saw him!" exclaimed Mrs. Gallaher, who had entered behind. "What's the manin' of that?"

"The manin' of it is," explained James, turning to her, "that Mrs. Mulligan's not the heiress afther all. Some mistake has bin made. But whoivir's to get the millions, it's not Mrs. Mulligan or anyone belongin' to her."

Mr. Gallaher instantly dashed his pipe into the grate and turned with exultant face to his wife.

"What did I tell you?" he yelled. "Didn't I say no good ud ivir come of it? Didn't I say there was somethin' behind it all along? Didn't I say——"

"Hould your tongue, you fool!" cried Mrs. Gallaher. "Jem, is this truth you're tellin' us?"

"As thrue as I'm standin' here, ma'am," re-

turned James. "An' the only one I pity in the matter is Kate."

"Glory be to God!" cried Mrs. Gallaher, beside herself with joy. "I say it agin an' agin, glory be to God for all His marcies! I haven't prayed in vain. I haven't gone down on my knees by night an' day in vain!"

She rushed away, and Mr. Gallaher, dancing on the hearthrug, snapped his fingers and repeatedly shouted "Horroo!"

Racing upstairs, Mrs. Gallaher opened the window and shrieked across the Market Square:

"Are you there, paupers? Will jooks an' earls an' marchionesses come for you now, paupers? D'you hear me, Mrs. Munro? Are you in rags yit? Is the Poorhouse waitin' for you? D'you hear me, paupers?"

So she continued until the veins in her neck and face swelled almost to bursting, and Mr. Gallaher, in desperation, ran up and dragged her back into the room. Then she rushed to the landing and shouted down:

"Jack! Go on your knees an' thank God you're saved from marryin' a pauper!"

Meanwhile the two young men below conversed over the matter more soberly until the night wore away and James rose to go home.

The cold daylight was spreading over the town, now deserted, and the bonfire was smouldering in the middle of the Market Square when the two friends shook hands.

"Good-bye, Jem," said Jack. "You heard what mother said about not marryin' a pauper?"

"I did," replied James.

"Well, pauper or no pauper," said Jack firmly, "I'm goin' to marry Kate Munro."

James looked at him with startled face.

"D'you raley mane it, Jack?" he gasped.

"I was nivir so sartin of anything," returned Jack, "as I am sartin of that. Whin she had the belafe that she was likely to be rich, she was willin' to have me, and now, in the hour of her disthress, I'm not goin' to turn my back on her. Wouldn't that be a mane thing to do, Jem?"

"It would, indade," replied James, averting his face.

"You wouldn't think I'd do the like o' that, would you, Jem?" asked Jack Gallaher, giving his friend's hand a last squeeze.

"I know you too well to think so bad of you, Jack," replied James Donohue, struggling with deep emotion. "It's you she loves through weal an' woe; an' if she gets you, she'll get a good man."

"I'll do my best to be good to her," said Jack. "Good-bye, Jem."

"Good-bye," returned James in a broken voice, as he turned up the collar of his coat and went away down the street.

Then with pale, resolute face Jack walked across the Market Square and entered the deserted hall of the "Horse and Car." He turned into the smoke room, where he found himself alone with broken furniture and a table of smashed tumblers. After an astonished look around, he was about to leave when he found Kate standing in the doorway. She had on an apron, her sleeves being turned over her elbows. Underneath her tossed hair he noticed her eyelids swollen with crying. But she smiled at him as he went in.

"This is a bad knock down you've had, Katie," said he.

She made no rejoinder, but her underlip trembled as she turned from him and walked to the window.

"You've all the care of the place now on you, I see," he remarked.

"Father's in bed," she returned. "He doesn't undherstand a word I say to him. Mother's bad, too. There's nobody left but Mary Ann."

"What!" exclaimed Jack. "All gone?"

As he spoke he went to her and looked at her, but she turned her face aside.

"They're all gone," said she. "An' robbed all they could lay their hands on before they left. There was no one to stop thim."

"Have you told the polis?" asked Jack.

"What's the use?" returned Kate. "We've enough thrubble without that."

"An' Mrs. Mulligan?" asked Jack, after a moment's pause.

"She's goin' too," answered Kate. "I've just been up with her, thryin' to get her to stay. For, sure, it's not her fault! But she won't stay. She's gettin' ready for the road agin, she says."

"Well, afther all," said Jack, hopefully, "things mayn't be as bad as you think, Kate. Somethin' can be saved from the wreck, an' plaise God, whin we're married, we'll pull the ould 'Horse an' Car' together agin an' make somethin' out of it."

Kate remained silent a moment, then shook her head.

"We'll nivir be married now, Jack," said she, with a sob in her throat.

"Why not?" he asked.

She stepped back from him, for he had come quite close, and shook her head again.

"Jack," said she, looking steadfastly into his face, "whin I agreed to marry you, I hoped I could bring you plinty of money. And it was only for that I cared about it. I wanted nothing for myself, but for you I'd have taken all I could get. But that is all past an' gone. You are free now. I wouldn't dhrag you down. And, you know, you nivir raley cared for me."

"You can say that to my face!" exclaimed Jack Gallaher, seizing her hands and pulling her towards him, despite her resistance. "You think I'm a mane cur like that? Katie, before God, no other girl will ivir be my wife! . . . . Money, is it? You're worth your weight in gold. Too good for me you are! Far too good, my darlin' Kate, for the likes o' me!"

For a moment or two she gazed dazedly at his ardent face. Then, throwing her arms about his neck, sobbed with her face against his breast.

And as they stood there, pressed in each other's arms, Mrs. Mulligan passed out in her oldtime rags and with her oaken stick, and presently they heard her shrill, exulting voice far down the street singing:

"I built a house with care and there
Care long with me did fare O!
But now I trudge the dusty road,
The rags I wear my only load,
The whole wide world is my abode—
An' the divil a hair I care O!"

THE END.

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